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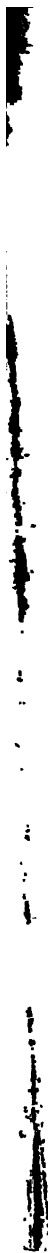


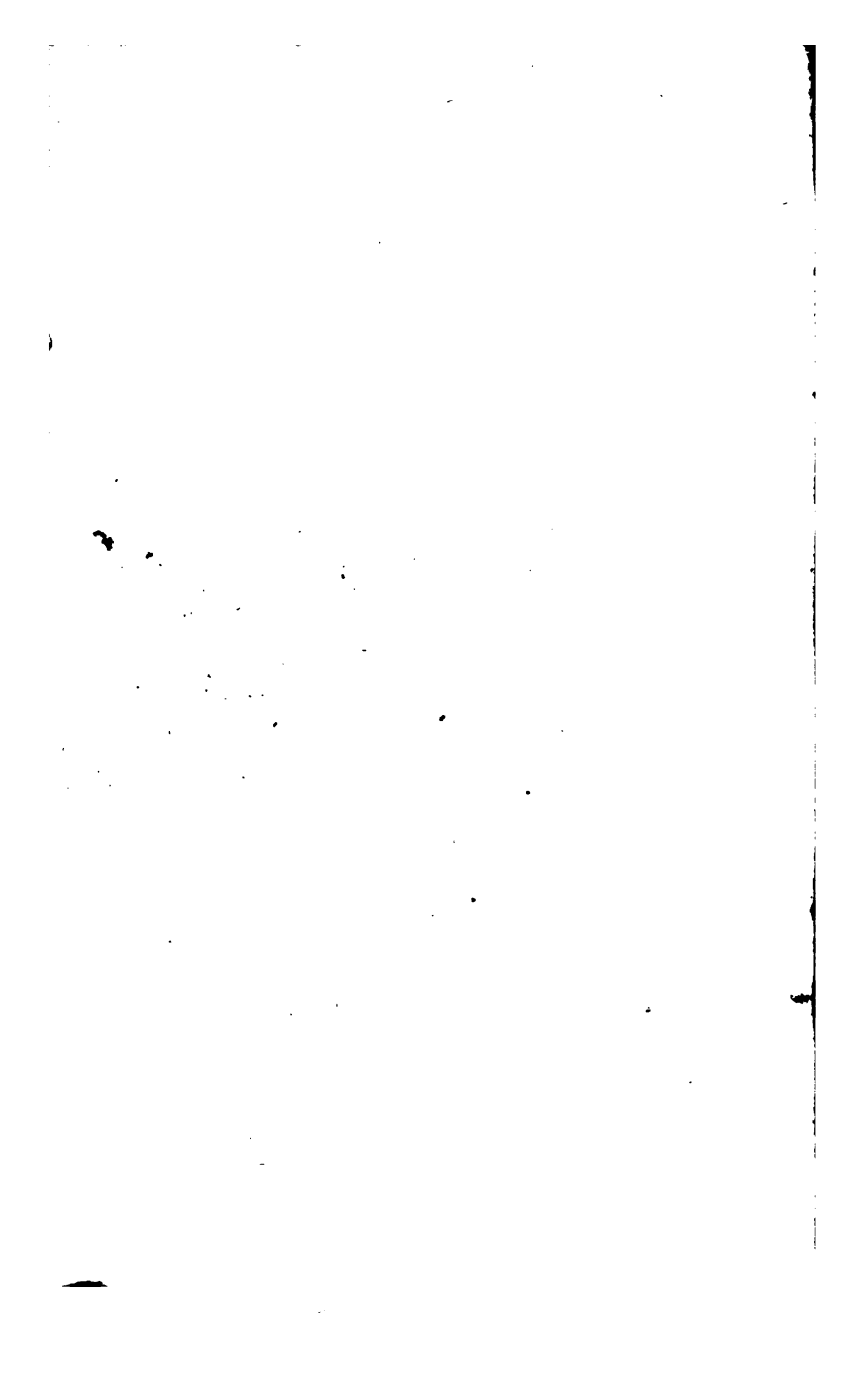
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VILLAGE DIALOGUES,

15-44
BETWEEN 243/113

FARMER LITTLEWORTH, REV. MR. LOVEGOOD,

AND OTHERS.

BY

ROWLAND HILL, A. M.

FOUR VOLUMES IN TWO.

WOODWARD'S FIRST AMERICAN EDITION,

FROM THE FOURTH LONDON,

Corrected by the Author.

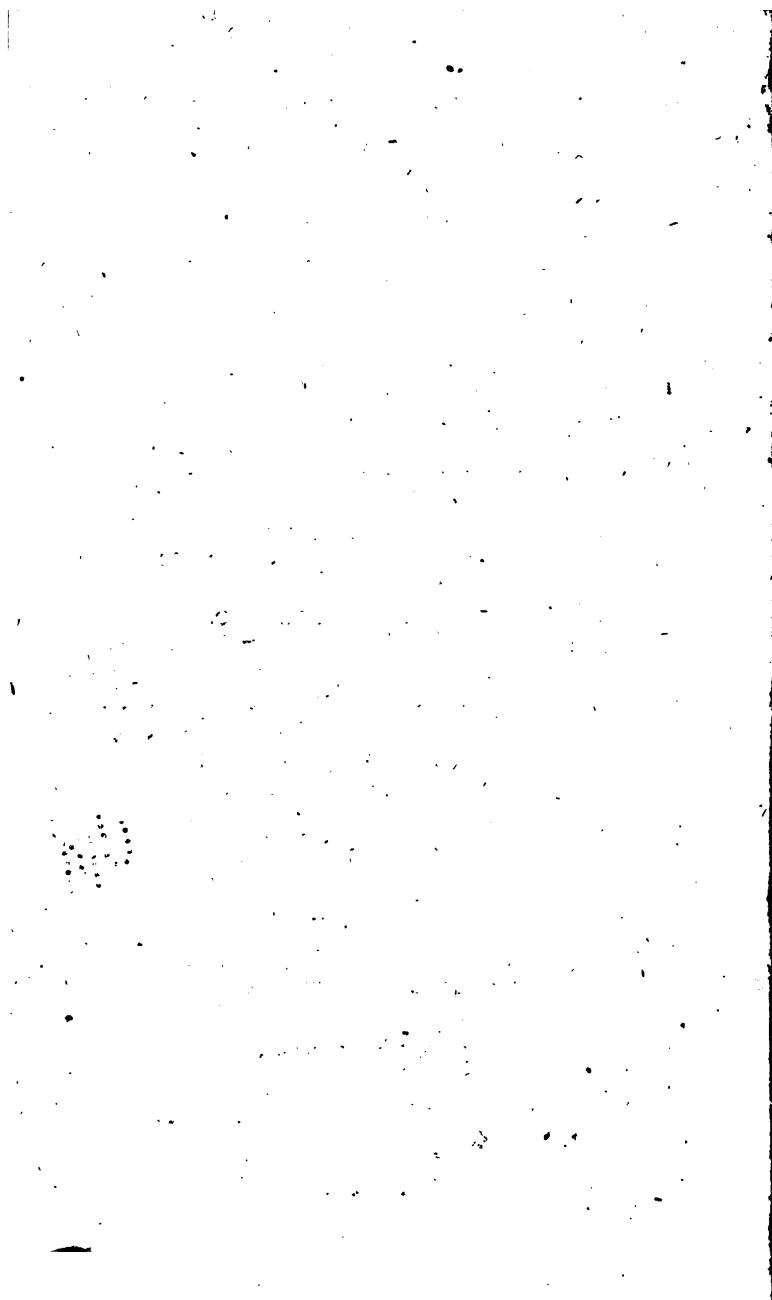
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VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUE I.

COTTAGE PIETY; OR THE GOOD ORDER OF THOMAS NEWMAN'S FAMILY.

FARMER LITTLEWORTH AND THOMAS NEWMAN.

*The Farmer goes after his Labourers, and finds
Thomas at his Work, singing.*

Farmer. WELL, Thomas, you seem very merry; what are you singing?

Thomas. Why, master, I am singing one of the Songs of Sion.

Far. What sort of songs are they?

Tho. I am singing *his* praises who hath redeemed me by his blood, sanctified me by his Spirit, and leads me to his glory: and while I am singing I am cheerful, and then I can work the better. Besides, these good songs keep bad thoughts out of my heart; and you know, master, bad thoughts are bad things, and bring about bad actions.

Far. Why, Thomas, I wonder how you can be so merry in these hard times?

Tho. Hard! master! Why we never mind hard times while we can but live with a joyful hope of a happy eternity; we need "be careful for nothing, while with prayer and thanksgiving we can make our requests known unto God."

Far. I am sure my wife and I have care enough ; what between my son, who is gone to sea, and my three daughters, whom I can never keep at home, unless they have twenty gossips, and fine misses with them : though I have such a good farm, yet it all goes as fast as it comes in.

Tho. O master, you want a proper housekeeper.

Far. Nay, Thomas, you should not say so, for my old dame is as good a housekeeper as any in the parish, if my children did not turn out so untowardly.

Tho. The housekeeper I mean, is, Mr. Godlyfear; and I trust, by the blessing of God, I know the worth of that gentleman very well, he has lived in my house almost ever since Mr. Lovegood has been vicar of our parish; and Mr. Godlyfear charges nothing for his wages; though he provides us with more bread and cheese, in these hard times, than ever we had when times were better. And, master, if so be I may be plain with you, had you and madam the same housekeeper, he might have kept your son from running into wickedness, and then he need not have gone to sea; and he would have made your daughters keep at home and mind the business of the house.

Far. Why, Thomas, you are not the worse for hearing your *parson*. I confess he has made you a better man than when you came home drunk with me from Mapleton fair.

Tho. A thousand, and a thousand times I have thought, that we were worse than the hogs we went to buy, and which I drove home the next day.

Far. Ah! Thomas, that was partly my fault.

Tho. But, master, if you think I am the better for hearing our minister, why won't you come and hear him too?

Far. Why, if I did, I should be *jeer'd* at all the mar-

ket over. You know, Thomas, your cottage is not in our parish; and what would our rector say, if I was to leave our church to hear Mr. Lovegood? for you know he hates him *mortally*; calls him all sorts of names; says he is a '*Thusiast*'; but what he means by it I cannot tell: and I should have as good a peel about my ears from my wife and daughters, as ever I should have from the parson.

Tho. What of all that, master, if you could but get good to your soul? for there is no good like it.

Far. Ah, Thomas! this is fine talk, for if I was to quarrel with our parson, I should never have any peace in the parish, and he would raise my tythes directly.

Tho. Why since I have been blessed with the fear of God, I have been kept from the fear of man; and it has been a thousand times better with me ever since. Now I am a poor man, and had need fear every body, and you have a good farm and need fear nobody. If Mr. Godlyfear had lived in your house, he would have kept from you far enough such fears as these.

Far. I confess, at times I should be glad of such a guest, for he seems to have kept your house very well,—How many children have you?

Tho. Thank God, master, I have six, and another a-coming.

Far. Why, how do you provide for them all?

Tho. By prayer and patience.

Far. I am sure you must have something better than that.

Tho. Better, master! I am directed to pray for my daily bread, and wait with patience till it comes; and the Lord is as good as his promise; for if we "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us." If I am poor, and a little pinched at one time, I have plenty at another. To be sure it was to admiration

what a sight of things were sent us, when my wife, the fourth time she lay-in, was brought to bed of twins. Just as we began to mistrust what we should do, when the children came so fast, in came madam Trusty, 'Squire Worthy's housekeeper, with such a nice bundle of baby-linen, and other things for my wife, that she and the children were soon dressed like *gentlefolks*; and, I am told, the Miss Worthies made these nice clothes with their own hands. Then two days afterwards, two of the young ladies came themselves to our cottage, and gave my wife half-a-crown a piece; and the same day, Mrs. Traffick of the shop, sent her such a large pitcherful of nice smoking-hot caudle, it would have done your heart good only to have smelt it; and said, that when the pitcher was empty, we were to send it back, and she would fill it again. Our dear minister too went about and got us money enough to buy coals, to serve us all the winter: and at the christening, he gave us five shillings to help us on: so that I was never better off in all my life; for the faster the children came, the better we were provided for. I will promise you, master, we had enough and enough to do to praise God for his mercies on these occasions. And though I say it that should not, our poor children look as decent and as healthy, as any children in our parish, or the next to it.

Far. Well, Thomas, you had need *mind your hits* to breed them all up.

Tho. Why, master, you know the old proverb, "God helps them that help themselves:" for first, I always put the children to work as soon as they are able: they either spin or knit; and my second son, Billy, has got a loom, which our worthy 'squire gave him; and he weaves very tidily, and my wife always keeps us well mended; she can put on many a patch, but she will never let us appear ragged: but then;

master, we get all this by living in the fear of God.

Far. Why, Thomas, you live so orderly, I should be glad to stop a little longer, that I might hear your way of living.

Tho. Why, master it would look so much like bragging and boasting, were I tell you about our poor way of serving God in our cottage since he has changed my heart, that I should be quite ashamed of myself.

Far. Nay, but I must hear it, that I may tell it to my wife and daughters ; perhaps they may mend their ways, if I tell them of yours.

Tho. Well, master, if madam Littleworth and your daughters can get any good by it, and as you insist upon it, I will tell you how we live, both on week days and on Sundays. When I am called to labour, as soon as my wife and I are out of bed, I kneeldown and go to prayer, by the bed-side ; then I go to work. She dresses the children, and sets the house in order. When I come home to breakfast, the milk porridge, or what my wife can get for us is all ready ; we never have any tea but on Sundays, for it will not do for a hardworking family, and many of our neighbours call it *Scandal broth*.

Far. Ah, Thomas, I fear you are right there, for when my wife and daughters have their gossips, and our little Sam the plough-boy, puts on his livery, that we may look like *gentlefolks*, I hear nothing else.

Tho. Well, master, I make my eldest boy ask a blessing, and then the victuals goes down with a blessing : Next I make the children say a hymn or some other good lesson out of the books that our minister gives us. Then one of the other children returns thanks ! After that my wife takes down the Bible, and reads a chapter, and I go to prayer : then I go to work, and as you know, master,

take my eldest son, Thomas, with me, and he helps me wonderfully; and I do think I can do almost double the work, since I have had him with me. I really think, master, your daughters would not be able to spend so fast, if I and my son did not work so hard; but I love to work for a good master.

Far. Well, Thomas, I shall have no objection against raising your son's wages, for he is a good lad.

Tho. Thank you kindly, master, for the times are very sharp, and my son is a growing, hungry boy.— But I will tell you what we do next. I come home to dinner: now, you know, master, as we have a bit of a garden, which I dig up at odd times, and we keep a pig, which we kill for the winter, what between the pickings out of the garden, the acorns which the children pick up out of the squire's park, and a little barley meal, it does not cost us much to keep it; so that we can get a slice of bacon, and that relishes the potatoes and garden stuff, and I really think we are as thankful for that, as many a lord is for twenty times as much. Then I make one of the children read a bit of the Pilgrim's Progress, or some other good book, that Mr. Lovegood gives us, and then I go to my work; and master, if you please, I'll tell you the thanksgiving hymn, I sing as I walk a long.

Far. Well, Thomas, let us hear it, for I am told you could sing as merry a song as any of us, before Mr. Lovegood came into your parish.

Tho. Well then, master, this is my song:—

MY heart and my tongue shall unite in the praise
Of Jesus, my Saviour, for mercy and grace;
He purchas'd my pardon by shedding his blood,
And bids me inherit the peace of my God.

My lot may be lowly, my parentage mean,
Yet born of my God, there are glories unseen;
Surpassing all joys among sinners on earth,
Prepared for souls of a heavenly birth.

Redeem'd from a thousand allurements to sin,
I find in my cottage my heaven begin ;
And soon shall I lay all my poverty by,
Then mansions of glory for ever enjoy.

By the sweat of my brow, while I labour for bread,
Yet guarded by him, not an evil I dread ;
And while I'm possess'd of all riches in thee,
My poverty comes with a blessing to me.

My labouring dress I shall soon lay aside,
For a robe bright and splendid, a dress for a bride ;
A bride that is married to Jesus, the Lamb,
Shall shine in a robe, which is ever the same.

If my fare shall be scant, while I travel below,
Yet a feast that's eternal shall Jesus bestow ;
No sorrow, nor sighing, shall ever annoy,
The heavenly banquet I there shall enjoy.

If my labouring body goes weary to rest,
Yet sav'd by the mercy of Jesus, I'm bless'd ;
Fresh strength, for my labour on earth he bestows,
And above I shall bask in eternal repose.

Far. I confess, Thomas, you sing better sort of songs than we sing at our Christmas merry-makings ; but let us hear how you end the day.

Tho. After my work, I return home ; down I sit, and all my children come round me. I confess, master, I am a little too fond of the twins, they are a pair of brave children : so I put one on one knee, and the other on the other : then I give them all a kiss, and my hearty blessing ; for I love them dearly, and could work my skin to the bones to support them. Next I ask them what work they have done, how they have behaved to their mother and to each other : then I make the children read out of some good book, and I tell them what it means, and instruct them as well as I am able. Next we have a bit of supper, as the times afford ; and afterwards my wife reaches down the bible, and reads a chapter ; then

we sing an evening, or some other good hymn; and I go to prayer, after my poor fashion, and then our bed feels sweet to us; for, the Lord be praised! we have nothing to fear: for Poverty keeps the door from thieves, and a peaceable mind soon sets us all asleep.

Far. You have told how you live: I confess I should be ashamed to tell you how we live; but, Thomas, I do not pretend to be a *Saint*; yet the house would be all in an uproar if I was to call my family to *say their prayers*, as often as you do.

Tho. Many and many a man may *say prayers*, and never *pray*.

Far. Aye, true, Thomas; and so I thought when Mr. Dolittle came to our house, while our daughter Polly was likely to die of a brain fever. I thought it was shocking when he came to *say his prayers to her*, that the man who could come with Madam Dolittle and his children to our house two or three times a year, to supper and cards, (what games and rackets we used to have!) and now he was to *say his prayers*, which I am sure he would not have done, if Polly had not been sick; but, oh! how it shocked me to hear her ask, for she was out of her mind, after he had done, *if they might not have a game at whist?* Thomas, I think I must have your parson with me when I die, if I do not like him so well as I should while I live.

Tho. But, master, if I may be so bold, what came of it when Miss Polly recovered? If you sent for Mr. Dolittle to pray with her when she was sick, did you not send for him when she got better, to return thanks?

Far. O no: we forgot all that: but the parson sent a card, as my daughters call it, to tell them, that he and his family would come and see them upon Polly's recovery; and such a piece of work there was

to make out a proper card in return! how they should word it, and how they should spell it: for my daughters having been bred up in a farmer's house, and then sent to a boarding school, are neither farmer's daughters, nor *gentlefolks*; but, however, religion was never thought of then.

Tho. Well, master, I must not find fault with your parson; and I think you cannot find fault with mine; but, by your desire, I am next to tell you how we spend the Sunday.

Far. Why every day seems to be a Sunday with you, but as you do not then go to work.

Tho. But, master, we have something better still on the Sunday.

Far. [Taking out his watch.] I cannot walk very fast, and I must not stop longer, as it is almost dinner time; but I will be here again to-morrow, and then you shall tell me how you spend your Sundays, and here's a shilling for your boy.

Thomas's boy. Thank you, master, and be so good as to thank my young mistresses for the six-pence they gave me, when I brought the band-boxes from Madam Flirt, the milliner's.

Far. Ah! band-boxes! since my daughters have come home from the boarding school, they have all turned out such fine misses, that the family is all of an uproar. Such new-fangled fashions and customs, I never saw before. I rue the day I ever sent my daughters to that boarding school; but I must go: good day, Thomas.

Tho. Your servant master.

DIALOGUE II.

COTTAGE PIETY ON A SUNDAY.

FARMER LITTLEWORTH AND THOMAS NEWMAN.

Thomas is engaged in clearing ground.

Farmer. WELL, Thomas, you are going on with the job apace.

Tho. See master, what a deal of weeds, and rubbish, we have got together within these few days. All this puts me in mind of the natural heart of man, that there can be nothing done in it till the weeds and filth of sin are got out of it; and sin has taken deeper root in our hearts, than these briars and weeds have in this ground: and when we have got them all on a heap, we shall burn them out of the way. May the Lord do the same in all our hearts!

Far. Why, Thomas, I think Mr. Lovegood will make a *parson* of you.

Tho. Thank the Lord for his mercy! I hope he has made a christian of me; and that is all I want. But, master, I hope all is well at home, as you was not here yesterday, according as you said.

Far. O yes, but I could not get away from the parish meeting time enough: and there came in Dick Heedless, for relief, because his wife was brought to-bed, and though he had but two children before, he declared they were all starving. So I thought I would go and see; and to be sure such ragged children, such a dirty house and bed; such broken windows, and heaps of filth in every corner, I never saw before in all my *born days*. So I told the vestry,

that he had better wages than you, as I always gave him task work, otherwise he would not work at all; and he is a strong hearty fellow, and can do a deal of work if he likes it: And when I told him to come to your house, and you would put him in a better way of living, he swore a great oath, and said he would never be of your religion, for he was not bred up to your *way of thinking*.

Tho. Ah! when poor labouring men must run away to every idle wake, horse-race, boxing-match, and cock-fight, no wonder that there is nothing left for the family. I am very glad 'squire Worthy is determined to put them all down in our parish, for our minister preached a trimming sermon against them all; and the 'squire thanked him for it in the church yard, before all the people, and promised him there should be no such doings in that parish. I promise you, master, we never were so well off before; what between the minister and the 'squire, there is not half the wickedness in our parish that there was a few years ago.

Far. There are not many such 'squires as 'squire Worthy in our parts.

Tho. The Lord send more of them, master! for it is wonderful the good our 'squire does in setting such a good example. Hail, rain, or shine, let who will be away from the church, the 'squire and his worthy family are sure to be there. It does my heart good to see them all come in; especially, when I consider, how many poor people are relieved by them: and it is wonderful, how he takes to our minister, and says all manner of good of him wherever he goes.

Far. But, Thomas, I hear from my wife and daughters, how *desperately* 'squire Bluster of Revel-Hall, has quarrelled with your 'squire, because he has turned out so religious; and how Madam Blus-

ter will not even speak to Madam Worthy, because when they went to see them, instead of having cards after tea, they had Mr. Lovegood there to *preach*, and say *prayers* to them, and after that they sung psalms.

Tho. Why, master, was there any harm in that? why when the wind sits that way, I hear the bell ring for family prayers every night; and when Mr. Lovegood is not there, it is *to admiration* how the 'squire himself can exhort and go to prayer with his family.

Far. But you know, Thomas, there are none of the ministers round the country come to see your parson on account of his religion.

Tho. Why, it is an odd story, if religion keeps other parsons away from Mr. Lovegood; but this is a mistake, master, for there are Mr. Meek and Mr. Godlyman, and other good ministers besides, that come to see our minister; and then we are sure to hear the bells calling us all to a sermon in the church after we have done our labour. I love to hear the sound of our church bells to my heart, for whenever they ring we are sure some good is going forward.

Far. But, Thomas, you must remember your promise, and tell us how you live on the Sunday.

Tho. Well then, master, you must know, my wife always contrives on the Saturday to get our clean linen ready for us, and somewhat a little more decent than our common working dress, to go to church in on a Sunday; the house is always done up quite neat and clean, and all our clothes got ready against the Sunday morning: then on the Sunday morning we get ourselves ready, and begin the Sabbath with a chapter out of the bible, a hymn, or psalm, and a prayer; then we all eat our breakfast, and afterwards send the four eldest of our children to the Sunday school, which our minister and 'squire Wor-

they have lately set up; after this we all go to church, if we can, unless my wife is obliged to stay at home to nurse the little ones, and then we take it by turns! and I must confess, master, I sometimes feel a little proud to see such a nice young growing family, and how neat and decent my wife makes us all look, and how orderly my children behave!

Far. Why, to be sure, Thomas, your wife is a wonderful notable woman.

Tho. Ah, master, and she is so loving and good, and kind, I would not part with her for the best duchess in the land. Well, and after church we all come home: then I ask the children, one by one, where the text was, and what they can remember of the minister's sermon, and talk with them of the good things we have been hearing. After we have had such a dinner as the mercy of God provides for us, we have another prayer: then the children go again to the Sunday school, and we all meet again at church in the afternoon; and I think it would do your heart good to hear what pains our dear minister takes with us, how nicely he expounds the chapters, and how he tries from the pulpit to make known to us the way of salvation. Whenever he tells us of our evil ways and evil natures, he seems to pity us to the very heart; and tears, again and again, have I seen drop down his dear cheeks, while he has warned us of these things: but when he tells us of the love of our lord Jesus Christ to us poor sinners, and what grace and mercy he can shew in changing our hearts, he is all alive, and seems to feel every word he says.

Far. Why, the people say, he has it all off by rote, and that he has no book, but the Bible, with him in the pulpit. He must have a wonderful memory!

Tho. By rote, master! he has it all in his heart; and by the grace of God, he has enough in his heart

for a thousand sermons; and as it comes from the heart, so it goes to the heart. Blessed be God, it comes to my heart! I am sure of that. Well, after sermon we all go home, and then we treat ourselves, for once in the week, with a dish of tea, and again talk over the good things we heard at church. At seven o'clock, we go down to the vicarage; and to see how lovingly Madam Lovegood shews it towards us all when we come into the house, would do any one good; how she helps to bring out the forms and chairs, and seats us all comfortably in the kitchen and hall; and when we are ready, our dear minister comes in and repeats to us what he had been preaching before, and exhorts us, and prays, and sings to us, so charmingly, that there comes such a blessing with it, as makes it feel like a little heaven upon earth.

Far. Ah! but master Thomas, our rector speaks and preaches desperately against these private meetings, and says your parson keeps a '*Venticle*'; but what he means by it I can't say; I suppose it was some hard word he brought with him from Oxford.

Tho. Mr. Lovegood is not the first man that has had all "manner of evil spoken against him," but we are sure it is "falsely, for Christ's name sake;" so that we can all "rejoice and be exceeding glad."

Far. Well, Thomas, it is to be hoped you have had enough of religion after all this.

Tho. Enough, master! why we are obliged to very sharp labour through the six days, it would be a thousand pities to lose any part of the only one day given us to seek after our heavenly rest: for what is the body to the soul! Blessed be God, we have a little more, after all this: we have some more good talk at supper, a chapter, a psalm, or hymn, and a prayer; and then we throw ourselves into the arms

of our dear God and Saviour, and sleep on earth as though we were to wake in heaven.

Far. But, Thomas, does God Almighty require all this religion from you? would not less serve?

Tho. Why, master, these things are our delight; we do not serve as slaves, but as sons; we serve, because we love the service: look into the bible, master, and you will find what my wife and I find, that religion is regeneration, and that holiness is heaven: all the Lord's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are paths of peace."

Far. I will look into our great Bible, when I get home; but I am ashamed to say, I know more about the christening and burials, that are written in the first leaf, than I do of the book itself. But how is it that you are so fond of talking about your wife?

Tho. Why she is the joy of my heart, and the comfort of my life.

Far. Where did you meet with her?

Tho. At church.

Far. Why, surely you did not go to church to seek for a wife?

Tho. After I began to know the value of my soul, I only went there to seek for salvation; but about half a year after I was converted from my sinful courses, I used to see a mighty decent dressing young woman, who came from Mr. Blindman's parish, to our church; and I thought of it; (I hope not too much, when I should have thought of something better), if I married, that the Lord might intend her for my wife; and as I used to meet her at Mr. Lovegood's house, I once plucked up courage and plainly told her what I thought about it; but I could get nothing out of her, but that she could not think of it till she had made it a matter of prayer; then, thought I directly, this is the damsel that will do for

me; for, the Lord knows, I made it a matter of prayer also, and this made me ask her the same question again and again.

Far. Lord, Thomas, do your sort of people go to prayer before you are married?

Tho. O master, if I may be so bold, you should not "take the Lord's name in vain," it is a breach of the third command; but we wish to pray upon all such occasions.

Far. I confess, I am apt to say words I should not; but how did the match go on?

Tho. Why a little after this, the young woman went and consulted Mr. Lovegood about my offer, and one evening Mr. Lovegood sent for me to his house, while she was there, and so down I came; and when I saw her there, my heart went pit-a-pat, in a manner I never felt it before. We then talked over the matter before him; and he read to us that wonderful good exhortation in the marriage-service, shewing the duties there would be between us; then he went to prayer with us, after this we promised each other marriage: and as soon as we were out-asked we were married accordingly. They do say, matches are made in heaven, and, I verily think ours was made in heaven, for I have been as happy as a prince ever since: for nothing makes us miserable; we can praise and bless God for every thing.

Far. Well, Thomas, I am sure you are a happier man since you have taken to this new religion.

Tho. New religion, master! why it is as old as the Bible; and, I am sure it is as old as the Common Prayer Book, and the Articles, and Homilies of our Church.

Far. Why, Thomas, you are quite a *scholar*; what do you mean by the Articles and Homilies? I never heard any thing about them in our Church.

Tho. Ah, but Mr. Lovegood tells us about them

in a very precious manner; and I am sure, I shall for ever bless the Lord, for the good I have received from what he has shewn us from them, and from the word of God.

Far. Well, Thomas, I must have another talk with you, for I want to know why you changed your religion.

Tho. Master, I will tell you at any time you please, how the Christian religion changed me.

Far. Then I will come again as soon as I can; but it begins to rain, and I cannot hobble very fast with my gouty legs. Farewell, Thomas.

Tho. Your servant, master.

DIALOGUE III.

THOMAS NEWMAN'S CONVERSION AND HAPPY MARRIAGE.

FARMER LITTLEWORTH AND THOMAS NEWMAN.

The Farmer goes into Thomas's Cottage, and waits till he comes home to Dinner. After some Conversation with the Wife and Family, Thomas comes in.

Thomas. A H, master! are you come into our poor habitation?

Far. Yes; for I was afraid to stand in the field, because of the gout.

Tho. Well, thank God, by his blessing on my health, I am able to get bread for myself and my poor family too; for I know nothing of the gout.

Thomas's Wife. My dear, see what a nice haslet Master has sent us. I have not boiled any bacon with the potatoes, for I am going to fry a bit of Master's kind present.

Far. Why, we killed a pig yesterday, and I sent Sam with a little that you might taste of it.

Tho. Thank you, master, a thousand times; for a little fresh meat is very *relishable* to a hard working family. [The dinner is prepared.]

Betty. Come, Billy, my dear, leave your loom, it is your turn to ask a blessing. [They all stand up.]

Billy. By the bounty alone of our Saviour we live.
Ador'd be his name for the food we receive;
But, O may our spirits be graciously led
To feed on himself—He is heavenly bred.

Far. There's a good boy; I wish I had taught my girls a few such good things. But, Thomas, while

you eat your dinner, you are to tell me about changing your religion.

Tho. Well, then, master, I'll tell you as near as I can, how, as I said, religion changed me.—My father, you know, was a poor working man, and died of a consumption; and then my mother went to the workhouse with two children. I was the oldest of them, and was put out apprentice to one old James Gripe, who used to work me morning, noon, and night, and half starved me; and his wife Margery was worse than he. So I ran away from them, and went to the justice about them; and his worship questioned me very hard, but got me a better place at farmer Thrifty's, where I had plenty of work, but good victuals and drink. But the farmer was all for the world, and many of the family were *desperate* wicked; and as I grew up, I wonder they did not make me as wicked as themselves. But wicked enough I was, God knows, for I scarce ever went to church, unless I was to meet some one there, or to shew my new clothes when I had any. I had no more notion of a Bible, or what it meant, than one of the horses I used to drive at plow.

Far. Why, Thomas, you had a *good heart at bottom*, or you would have followed more of their bad courses.

Tho. A good heart indeed! when I never prayed; read my Bible, thought of my soul, or any thing else, but wickedness. But you shall soon hear what a good heart I had: for I well remember, when I was about seventeen years old, while we were carrying barley, just as we were going to bind, about half the load slipped off the waggon, threw me down flat on my face, and then rolled upon me. And what thoughts I then had, no mortal can tell! I could neither struggle, cry, nor breathe. There I lay till I was

quite black in my face, and my breath was almost out of my body; I thought these words sounded like thunder in my ears, "Lost once, lost for ever!"—While my senses seemed almost gone from me, and before the barley was taken off, I was quite senseless for a while; but when the fresh air came to me, I soon began to breathe; and when my senses returned, I remember, I could not, but in my blind way, make somewhat of a prayer to God for my preservation; and directly the waggoner and the rest of the men, began to *jeer* me for my devotions; for I had but just before been singing one of my old foolish songs. But terribly bruised I was, and was obliged to keep my bed for three days, and could not go to work for a full fortnight afterwards.

Far. It was a very narrow escape indeed, Thomas. But did it not drive you to make some good resolutions? I remember, when I had the gout *deadly* bad in my head and stomach, I owed many, and many a time, that I would mend my ways: and once I sent for Mr. Dolittle, and he told me, he thought it would be no harm if I *did a little more*; but the Lord knows to my shame, as soon as I began to recover, I forgot ~~all~~ my vows.

Tho. Ah, so did I, master! but I have since found that all our resolutions to mend our ways come to nothing, *till God changes the heart*: and so it was with me; for directly as I could again get to work, I soon forgot my prayers, and was as light and as thoughtless as ever. For, though I had a little pride in me, not to neglect my work like many others, yet nothing like a fair or a wake for me. I am ashamed to think what a fool I used to make myself while I was dancing at the Golden Lion almost all night, when I was no more fit for such games than one of our cart horses.

Far. But surely, Thomas, there can be no harm in a little innocent mirth now and then.

Tho. Why, I'll tell you, master, I am never afraid of what I do, provided I can but feel prayer while I do it. Now at my labour I can sing and pray with a good conscience all the day long; but I never could ask God's blessing when I went to a wake; or that he would protect me at a horse race. Pray, master, do you ask a blessing over the card table when people come a merry-making to your house?

Far. Ah, Thomas, you come too near home; I must not tell you all we do at our house.

Tho. But, master, if you dare not tell all, the Lord knows all.

Betty. I am afraid, my dear, you press Mr. Littleworth rather too hard.—I hope you will excuse him, Sir, for my husband means no harm.

Far. No, no, Betty, I am sure Thomas means well; I shan't be angry; he may go on with his story.

Tho. Well, on I went year by year, getting worse and worse, till some years afterwards, when our vicar was removed to some sort of a '*thedral* place, as, I think they call it; and then some noble gentleman, *Lord Chancellor* I think it was, gave Mr. Lovegood the living.

Far. *The Lord Chancellor* you mean, Thomas.

Tho. Ay, ay, it may be so: he is a great man, and a mighty man with the king. May God bless him and the king too a thousand times, for sending such a good minister among us! Well, soon after Midsummer our new vicar came, and as it was the first time, a many people there were to hear him. Though we had heard nothing of him till we saw him in the church, yet it was to admiration how he read the lessons and prayers; they sounded like new prayers to me—he read them so wonderfully fine. But

when he got into the pulpit, we did not know what to make of it, for he had no book with him, but a little Bible. We thought for sure he had left his sermon-book behind him, while every moment we expected he would be *fast*; but on he went for a brave long time: and it is wonderful how lovingly he spoke to us, while he preached from this text, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves, your servants for Jesus's sake." He told us, how he hoped he was sent purely for the good of our souls; and how fervently he had prayed to God that he might come with a blessing among us; that his house, his heart was open to us, even the poorest of us; and that all his time and strength should be given up for our good. Never did any man surely win upon all the people by such a sermon, in coming to a new living, like our minister.

Far. Hold, master Thomas, not quite so fast; for there was old Mr. Goodenough, the schoolmaster, spoke against him downright at the first sermon: he said publicly, in the church-yard; he had no notion of such new fangled teachers, and that all the parish were *good enough* already, and he wanted to be no better; and that *every tub must stand upon its own bottom*: and from that time to this the old gentleman has come to hear *Mr. Dolittle*, of our parish, and says, his doctrine suits him best. And again, there was that noted good old lady, Madam Toogood, after the second sermon your parson preached, she went away to Mr. Blindman's church; and a notable story she told at our house when she came to drink tea with my wife and daughters; how he made out all the good people to be as bad as devils; and then she told us all how many times she went to church and sacrament; how often she said her prayers, and that in regard to her giving away to the poor, she was even *too good*.—But, Thomas, I'll tell you a se-

cret—While Madam Toogood was cracking : boasting away all the time she was drinking *scarbroth*, as you call it, her servant, who came to li her home, was telling in the kitchen of all her stin tricks :—how she made ever so many poor pec sick with her dish-wash, which she called Broth ; : how, while she was reading the psalms and lessc and doing her devotions, she would keep scolding the time : and that once upon a time, when she *made herself up*, by the Week's Preparation, for holy Sacrament, after she came to church, she fou that it was to be put off, as it was so near Easter ; : that then she fell into a terrible passion, and sa “ Lord have mercy ! have I had all this trouble nothing ! ” and that she was such a downright sco that no servant could live with her for six weeks.

Tho. Well, master, if this old lady can brag sh not like other people, like the Pharisee, let me co in with the poor Publican, and cry, *God be merc to me a sinner !*—his prayers will best suit my ca But if Mr. Goodenough and Madam Toogood not fear leaving their parish-churches, why should be afraid, at least once in a way, to leave yours ?

Far. Ah, Thomas, you have me there ! But ge with your story.

Tho. Why, master, that very sermon which I dam Toogood found such fault with, was the serr that did my soul more good than all the Serm I ever heard before ; for it was then that fait servant of God ript up the deadly wound in heart, which none but Christ could heal. I rem ber well the text, *The heart is deceitful above things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it* And plainly did he shew, from the Bible, the ru state of all mankind : How that, when Adam fell f God, all fell in him : and this he shewed was truth, all the Bible over : How that, before the f

the wickedness of man was so great upon the earth, and all flesh had so corrupted themselves before God, that there was but one family (that of Noah) in which the fear of God was preserved among the many millions which were upon the earth; and that a merciful and a righteous God could never have sent down such a judgment, if the great wickedness of man had not deserved it at his hands: and then he shewed that such was the hardness and wickedness of mankind, that as soon as they began to multiply upon earth a second time, they became again as vile as ever: that all the *waters* of the flood could never wash away the filth of the world: that then he tried the *fire* of his wrath upon the filthy cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; but still man continued the same most wicked creature: and that even afterwards, when God took one family to himself, that they might be his own peculiar people, as was the case with the Jews, though he was perpetually shewing the miracles of his power before them, and blessing them, more than any other people, with the gifts of his providence; yet while the meat was in their mouths, they rebelled against him, and made themselves worse than the heathen who knew him not: and that even when the dear Son of God himself came down from Heaven to save us, the Jews rejected him, and the Gentiles nailed him to the cross.

Far. Why, Thomas, when I was a school-boy, I used to read over my Bible then; and I remember, what you say is all very true.

Tho. Then, why should Mr. Goodenough and Madam Toogood be angry with our minister for telling the truth?

Far. To my way of thinking, people may have as much religion as they, without so much outside shew.

Tho. But, master, I must tell you how our minister

went on. From the Bible, he shewed us how that people lived now-a-days, just as they did ever since the world began. And, to be sure, what he said of the abominable lives of all mankind, shewed how true the Bible was. How he laid out the wicked ways of the world in all their public wars and cruelties against each other ! How he shewed, that whenever people could get together, it was only for all sorts of wickedness, cursing, swearing, fighting, lewdness, and every thing that was bad. Then he told us what miserable creatures sin made us in our own houses ; that malice, anger, pride, cruelty, were the tormentors of every family ; while Bibles were banished, prayer neglected, holiness laughed at, and every thing that related to the soul and matters of salvation, were never thought of : and that though, through the grace of God, some were saved from this dreadful state, yet, that the word of God had declared it, That " broad was the gate that led unto destruction, and many there were that went in thereat ;" and that " narrow was the way that led unto life, and few there were that found it." Then the good man stopt, and wept like the rain, as a father would over a dying child he dearly loved. So I took it ; and then, for the first time, I began to weep over my sinful state. O ! thought I, does that dear servant of God love my soul better than I love it myself ? while I thought that surely he meant all his sermon against me ; for my conscience told me I deserved it, and a thousand times more. There I sat, with a broken and contrite heart, for the first time ; and in the next pew sat Ned Swig, as he was once called, who keeps the Golden Lion ; where I had often been in my sinful practices, crying and grieving for sin, still more affected than myself. — [Thomas weeps.]

Far. Thomas, why should you cry? You should not be melancholy, for, I dare say, God Almighty will forgive you.

Tho. Why, my dear master, I know he has forgiven me; and like poor Mary Magdalene, it is fit that I should weep, as she did, out of love to him that loved her so much, because she had much forgiven.

Far. To be sure, there is a wonderful alteration in Master Swig's way of living; for they say, he once kept a *deadly* bad house; and that the first time he heard Mr. Lovegood, he went directly home, and pulled down from the walls all the merry songs and pictures which he had bought to please his customers. To be sure, some of them, they say, were enough to make one split one's sides with laughing; and his wife thought for sure he was mad; though since, she has become as strong a follower of Mr. Lovegood as himself; and in about a month afterwards, instead of his merry songs and pictures, it was all about religion:—A journey from Time to Eternity in one place; Mr. Dedd's Sayings in another: and then elsewhere, ever so many parliament acts against tippling and drunkenness, cursing and swearing; and then two fine pictures, called the *Higroglyphics**, or some such word, of the natural and spiritual man: but that is above my reading, Thomas.

Tho. And it was above mine too, till I heard Mr. Lovegood: but now I find, as we pray in the Christmas Collect, "That all who are regenerate, and born again, and are daily renewed by God's Holy Spirit," are spiritual men, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit: and that natural men act according to the natural corruptions of their heart; and that explains the two trees, which are man in two different states.

Far. Well, I am sure, I wonder Ned had such re-

* *Hieroglyphics*, the Farmer means.

solution to reform : I suppose, he must have lost many and many a golden guinea by his religion : for since he has taken to this new way, they say, he does not draw half the *drink* ; and I wonder how he can keep up his Golden Lion : for it is said, no man can have a drop of drink beyond a pint or two ; and that, from year's end to year's end, not a drunken man is ever known to come out of his house !

Tho. Now this is all true, and yet Master Edward is provided for in a way wonderfully providential ; for the precious word of life, held forth by our dear minister, has drawn many a poor sinner from afar to our church ; and then away they all go to the Golden Lion between the services.

Far. What ! from the church to the alehouse ; That is as bad as in our parish.

Tho. Why, master, if the good people in your parish should go from the church to any of the alehouses, that they might talk about the sermon, read the Bible, and sing God's praises, while they refresh themselves, I should see no harm in it : but I only meant to say, that if Master Edward has lost some of his customers, he may have his reward partly in this world : yet certainly he still loses some golden guineas ; but in the room of these he expects a golden crown. For once he lived by sin, but now he lives by faith ; and I am sure, while the Bible is true, he'll never starve :'' for if we first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things are to be added unto us."

Far. I confess, there is not such an alehouse in our town, though there are enough of them.

Tho. What ! are none of the gentlefolks, or justices, or quality of the town, willing to assist in reforming them ?

Far. Hush, Thomas, I am churchwarden this year ; they made me swear a desperate strict oath

against all these bad ways ; and if I was to stir in it, every one would be against me : but I'll promise you, the oath gripes my conscience pretty sharply ; and I do think if I was to come to your church, I should be in a state of desperation, unless I was to mend my ways.

Tho. Nobody that comes to our church is led into a state of desperation ; for as soon as ever our dear minister saw many of us weeping under a sense of sin, he besought us all to come to church in the afternoon, as he could not leave us till another Sunday, that we might hear what mercy there was in the Gospel for poor sinners : and from that time forward we had an afternoon sermon.

Far. Yes ; and a fine bustle this made among many of the parsons up and down the country, for bringing up such sort of customs of *double duty*, as they call it, in villages.

Tho. Why, if Mr. Lovegood had come into our parish on the same footing as you took the lease of your farm, he would have had a right to have made a bargain for his sermons, as you do at market for butter, cheese, cattle, and corn ; but, God be praised, he only thought of the salvation of our souls.

Far. Well, well, our minister wants to make us good too, if he can, for he tells us a deal more of our duty than many of us practise ; and we have all his sermons round once a year. I have heard them over nineteen times ; and he says we shall have no new ones till we practise the old ones better ; though he has given us two or three famous new ones of late against modern '*Thusists*', which come round about Whitsuntide. Madam Toogood says, one of them he borrowed from Mr. Blindman ; and the text is, " If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch." And a trimming sermon it is.

Tho. Why, I have heard our dear minister these

seven years, and he has his heart full of sermons, and they are always new.

Far. Now, Thomas, I think you are very uncharitable; for you condemn all ministers if they don't preach off-hand.

Tho. Nay, that is not true, master; for there is that dear loving gentleman, Mr. Fearing, he dares not preach as our minister, and some others, without his sermon-book; but blessed sermons he reads to us as ever man can write. I love to hear him, dear man. But, master, if you please, I would rather tell you about the afternoon-sermon, which was such a blessing to my poor bleeding heart, as the time slips away.

Far. Well, I can sit a little longer.

Betty. Would you like to eat a little bit with us, in our plain way? I can fry you a fresh bit, if you please, Sir. Billy, fetch master a clean trencher.

Far. No, Betty, I thank you; I had rather go hungry to my dinner. But let us hear, Thomas.

Tho. O master! after my heart had been so deeply cut in the morning, instead of going home to dinner with the family, I took my bread and cheese, and went into the fields, walking about, crying with Job, "Behold, I am vile;" and with the poor publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" When I heard the bells ring, away to church I went; and twice to church on the same day, I never went before. On the road I met poor Master Edward: I began telling him the feelings of my heart; and, instead of answering me, he wept; and I wept too. We well remembered how much evil we had done to each other, by being mess-mates in sin; and into the church we went. Our dear minister soon came in; and in the second lesson he read these words: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save

sinner." These words so affected him, that he stooped and wept, then wiped his eyes, and read them over a second time. After prayers, he got into the pulpit, and took the same words for his text; and O, such a sermon, sure, never was preached before. He shewed, all the Bible over, that never did any poor sinner sue for mercy but he had it. He told us of Manasseh, of Saul, the Philippian gaoler, and the thief upon the cross: that all these poor bleeding penitents were at once accepted, without any other righteousness but what was to be found in him who died to justify the ungodly; and that *whosoever*—and again he said it, "Whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out." O what a time of love was this! How Edward looked at me, and I at him, while we both, by faith, looked at Jesus Christ, who died for our redemption!

Far. And was this all you did for your salvation?

Tho. Why, master, nothing more could be done; for the love of Christ broke our hearts into a thousand pieces: from that moment we felt the chains of sin drop off from the soul, and we were at liberty, to love and serve the Lord. Now, for the first time, we began to experience what it was to be "made new creatures in Christ Jesus; old things passed away, and all things became new." Being thus "made partakers of the divine nature," and "renewed in the spirit of our minds," that prayer in the communion service, we trust, was answered now, which we might have read, but never prayed before: "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name." And when he concluded that blessed sermon with these words from St. Paul, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your

reasonable service;" with a hearty Amen, we at once found that we could give ourselves away to live to his glory.

Far. Ah !, but Master Thomas, all the followers of your Vicar are not such saints, for all this : for there is Mr. Feigning, the Squire's steward, though he is a wonderful stickler for your parson, is no better than he should be : and Mrs. Fairspeech, though she comes with such a wonderful sanctified face, loves a sly drop as well as any of her neighbours, and then scolds her husband for not being of her religion.

Tho. Yes ; and it grieves us to the heart, to think that there should be any " who name the name of Christ, and depart not from iniquity : " but hypocrites there always were, and will be ; yet real religion is never the worse for them. But still, you know, master, the Gospel has done wonders among us. Common swearers, and others, who never prayed before, have been made to pray of late : drunkards have become sober, and their ragged families decently clad : Sabbath-breakers, who had heart for nothing on that day but vanity and sinful mirth, can now fill the house of God, and find it their heaven upon earth ; yea, and families where wrath and anger reigned, are now ruled by love, by " that meekness and gentleness which is in Christ Jesus." Thus have we happily proved " the Gospel to be the power of God to our salvation," by the blessed fruits of righteousness which have been produced thereby.

Far. I don't wonder that you are so fond of your sort of ministers, while they do you so much good.

Tho. Why, we care not what sort they are, provided they are but of a godly sort : but you know, master, how terribly people are hardened in sin, if the lives of the ministers, and other great folks, be inconsistent with the gospel ; and how many there

are now-a-days who scoff at the Bible itself outright, when such men so mortally wound so good a cause, Yea, such men had much better never preach at all, a thousand times, while their lives, so belie their words.

Far. Well, I must confess, that I have many times thought that if I were as good as the parson, I need be no better: but is not young Parson Merryman one of your sort of late? I remember him when he was a strange wild *blude*; how he used to gallop over my farm, shouting and roaring like a madman, after Lord Rakish's hounds; and how *deadly* angry he used to be with his uncle, who would have him made a parson of, because there was a good fat living in the family; how he could crack his jokes, how soon he *did* over his parishioners in the afternoon, that he, and the gentlefolks who came to see him on the Sunday, might not be disturbed from dinner and the bottle.

Tho. Yes, master; and I dare say you have heard that when our minister was called to preach before my Lord Bishop, and all his clergy, how that worthy young gentleman was so affected at the things he heard about the duty of ministers (what they should preach, and how they should live) that he could not be at rest in his conscience till he came to see Mr. Lovegood; and now every body wonders at what an altered man he is.

Far. Aye; and it is not above two years ago when he came to our town, while the stage-play people were there, and how he romanced with our daughters; and what a racket he kept up, when all of them should have been in bed and asleep, it would be a shame to tell.

Tho. Yes; but then he was a minister of man's making; but now he is a minister of God's making. Once he loved his sports, but now he loves the souls of his parishioners: once he loved the fleece, but now

he loves the flock ; once he was for this world, but now he is for the next. O master, what wonders are done by the grace of God on the hearts of sinners !

Far. Well, Thomas, I believe Mr. Merryman is a true convert ; but I must be going ; you and your family have picked up the scraps pretty clean.

Tho. It is too good to be wasted : thank the Lord, we have had a charming meal. [Thomas to his daughter.] Come, Betsy, my dear, it is your turn to give thanks.

Betty to the daughter. Don't be ashamed, my good child ; but let master hear how well you can say your thanksgiving hymn. [The daughter says her hymn.]

The beasts of the fields, and the fowls of the air,
Are kept by thy pow'r, and fed by thy care ;
Thy merciful providence, faithfully nigh,
Sustains the poor ravens whenever they try !

But they cannot praise thee ; they know not from whom
The streams that they drink and their sustenance come :
Far wiser may we be, and thankfully own,
That all our supplies are from Jesus alone.

Far. There's a brave girl ; here is sixpence between you and your brother, for saying his grace before dinner ; and when you lie-in, Betty, I will remember you.

Tho. The Lord bless you, master, with his grace, for your kindness. But you would have me tell you how we live ; and, to my mind, you would not think we do right if we were to neglect our chapter and our prayer because you are here. Betty's a good scholar ; and I have a little pride in me that people should know how bravely she can read. [Betty takes down the Bible, reads the latter part of the 14th chapter of St. Luke.]

Thomas to Betty. Can't you remember, my dear, what a wonderful sermon our minister made against all these sad excuses ; how that a man could not pur-

chase a piece of ground, buy a few cattle, have a little trade, or marry a wife, but out of all these things, innocent in themselves, they could find an excuse to neglect their salvation, and despise the marriage-supper of the gospel!

Thomas then offers up a short prayer: prays for the King, and his favourite, the Lord Chancellor, for sending them Mr. Lovegood; and that God would bless his ministry to them: and, after some other petitions, prays affectionately for his master and his family. The Farmer gets up much affected;—turns to the window—stifles his concern—wipes his eyes, and says—

Far. Thomas, I'd give the world to be as good a man as you are: and that my wife was as good a woman as your Betty. Well, well, I will pluck up courage, and come and hear Mr. Lovegood next Sunday, come what will of it; and I'll try to bring my daughter Nance with me, for she does not seem to be so bad set against Mr. Lovegood as the others; but I know I shall hear enough of it from Mr. Dottle and my neighbours.

Tho. I wonder that gentleman should say such hard things, wherever he goes, against our good minister, and that he should so often preach against him as a hypocrite and over-righteous 'thusist; surely, it is out of ignorance. The Lord open his eyes! But I am a few minutes beyond the time of labour. Come, Thomas, my boy, let us be gone, master wants to be at home.

Far. Farewell, Thomas.

Tho. and Betty. The Lord bless you, master, for your kindness.

DIALOGUE IV.

THE CHURCH DEFENDED AGAINST FALSE FRIENDS AND INTERNAL ENEMIES.

THE REV. MR. DOLITTLE, FARMER LITTLEWORTH, AND HIS FAMILY.

We left the Farmer much struck and affected by Thomas Newman's Conversation and Prayer. On the next Sunday afternoon, he and his daughter Nancy attended at Brookfield Church, after he had been at Mapleton Church on the morning. He received the Word with solemn surprise, and was soon melted into tears. Thomas immediately caught his Master's eye, and began to mingle the sympathetic tear with his. Mr. Lovegood's looks were directed that way; and he was so overpowered at the scene, that for a while he could scarce continue his discourse. Mr. Lovegood's engaging and affectionate style of preaching had frequently a great effect on his auditory; and remarkably so on the Sunday afternoon when the Farmer first attended. Nor was the conversation less affecting between Thomas and his Master when the service was ended. He was at once disarmed of all his prejudices, and mingled almost every word with a tear. Miss Nancy's mind began also to open to receive the truth, if in a less rapid, yet not in a less gracious manner.

When he arrived at his own house, Mrs. Littleworth conceived he had heard some very bad news, and begged to know what it was. He said, it was very good news. The question was naturally asked,

If he had heard any thing about Henry, their son? The Farmer began to explain the nature of the good news, or glad tidings of salvation, he had been hearing at Brookfield Church, mixing each word with a tear. The wife and daughters Nancy excepted, began at once to suspect that his brains would be turned; and that the peace of the family would be ruined by his *new* religion.

No opposition, from that quarter however, prevented the Farmer and Miss Nancy from giving all possible diligence to attend the means of grace.— His visits to Thomas Newman were now almost as constant as each returning day; who soon introduced him into Mr. Lovegood's company. Mr. Lovegood put into his hands several profitable books for his private instruction; which he read with great attention and diligence, and through his now constant attendance, twice every Sabbath, and oftentimes on Mr. Lovegood's Week-day Lecture, he being a man of an intelligent mind, though but poorly educated, began to grow in grace and divine knowledge very considerably.

The family, however, were terribly perplexed at the change: and, after they had said all in their power to dissuade him against his new notions in religion, concluded, it might be the best plan to call in Mr. Dolittle to their aid. Happily, however, for the Farmer, his mind began to be well-settled and grounded in the knowledge of the gospel before this visit took place. Mrs. Littleworth and Miss Polly, however, called at Mr. Dolittle's, one market-day, and invited him to come and see what could be done. Soon afterwards he rode, one afternoon, according to his promise, to the Farmer's house; and the conversation, as it then took place, shall next be laid before the reader.

Mr. Dolittle. WELL, Master Littleworth, how are you? I was afraid you were ill of the gout, for I have not seen you at church above these three months.

Farmer. I am obliged to you, Sir, for your kind enquiries; but, I thank God, of late I have been better than usual.

Dolit. How is it then, Sir, that you have been so remiss in your duty in not attending your church?

Far. Oh, no, Sir; I have not neglected church; for I, and my daughter Nance, have lately been to hear Mr. Lovegood.

Dolit. So I have heard, Sir; and, in a little while longer, I should not wonder if he were to drive both of you mad, by his enthusiastic harangues.

Far. Why, Sir, did you ever hear him?

Dolit. I hear him! No, Sir; nor shall I ever disgrace my character by attending such modern seducers.

Far. Did you ever talk to him, Sir?

Dolit. I talk to him! no; nor will any other rational clergyman hold conversation with such sort of fellows.

Far. "Does our law judge any man before it hears him?"

Dolit. O Sir! this is bringing matters to a fine pass; you can quote scripture against your minister already.

Far. Now, Mr. Dolittle, it is not fit that either you or I should put ourselves out of temper while we are talking about religion: but if you will be so kind as to come in and sit down, and drink a dish of tea, I should be glad to talk matters over with you; and, if I am wrong, the Lord direct you to set me right!

Dolit. No, Mr. Littleworth; while you, as churchwarden, can act as you do, and can set such an ex-

ample as to leave your own parish-church, and run rambling after such sort of teachers, I shall not think it proper to darken your doors any more. If you had gone to the meeting after old Dr. Dronish, it would not have been half so bad; for, I am told, he preaches good, sober, moral sermons; but to run rambling after such wild enthusiasts, is too bad.

Mrs. Littleworth. But, Sir, if you will not drink tea with my husband, yet, I hope, you will stop for my sake, and my daughters; for his new notions in religion are as bad a grief to us as they can be to you.

Dolit. Ah, Mrs. Littleworth, I pity you to my heart! It is amazing how much the peace and comfort of people's families are broken up by these religious disputes.

Far. Well, Sir, if you won't accept the invitation from me, you are quite as welcome to accept it from my wife and daughters; neither does religion, nor Mr. Lovegood, teach me to be rude or uncivil to my neighbours; so that such disputes cannot be laid to the charge of religion, but on those who oppose it. I should be very glad if you would walk in and sit down, that we may talk matters over in a christian-like manner; and while I answer for myself, if I should in anywise speak *unmannerly*, I'll beg your pardon.

Dolit. Well, Sir, this is fair. I am apt to be a little hasty, I confess; but you must not impute this to the badness of my heart.

Far. Why, Sir, to my humble way of thinking, all that comes out of us, which is bad, comes from something that is bad within us. But pray, come in Sir? [calls his daughter Polly.] Where is Sam? Tell him to take Mr. Dolittle's horse, put him in the stable, and give him a lock of hay, and a good feed of corn.

[Mr. Dolittle comes in; a fire is lighted in the best parlour, and tea is brought in; but no one appears

but Mrs. Littleworth and Miss Nancy to wait on the Rector.]

Far. Why, Nancy, where are your sisters?

Miss. Nancy. They are gone up stairs to dress.

Far. To dress! Why, were they not dressed before Mr. Dolittle came? Now, all this they got by going to that boarding-school. They can't make you a dish of tea without putting on some new-fashioned gown; or new-fangled cap, and some other *nonsenses*. I hope, Sir, you will talk to them for their pride; I cannot see the sense of such ceremonies in our way of living.

Dolit. Perhaps not, Sir, but *young ladies* will have their foibles. [Their appearance in a gaudy, taudry dress, prevents any farther conversation on that subject.]

Dolit. continues. Now, Sir, I am ready to hear what has made you change your religion, and why you have left your parish-church.

Far. Well, Sir, as near as I can, I'll tell you all about it. When my father sent me a courting to my present wife (Farmer Greedy's daughter) after we had made a match of it, we put our fortunes together, and I bought the lease of my farm of the late Lord Rakish; who was as *wild a blade* as the present Lord that now is; and as he wanted money, they say, his steward received a *sly* sum of my wife's father, that we might have a better bargain; but of this I have no certain knowledge.

Dolit. I doubt, there are too many of these sly bargains made; but what has this to do with your change in religion?

Far. Why, having got such a good bargain, no world for me like the present; my heart was set upon it. I could be up early and late, about from fair to fair, that I might buy and sell, and get gain; and

this I foolishly called the *main chance*: but as for my Bible and prayer, and the concerns of my precious soul, I had no more regard to these things than a beast.

Dolit. And pray, where was the sin of this? Should not every young man mind what he is at when he takes a large concern? But if you did not do your duty in *saying your prayers*, and attending your church, that was your own fault.

Far. Yes, Sir; these things, as they respect my worldly concerns, “I should have done, and not left the other undone.” But that was not my case, for I was as wicked as——

Dolit. Hold, Mr. Littleworth; for it has been told me, that when the Bishop came about to confirm in those days, no young man appeared so decent, and so devout, as you then were; and that, for some time afterwards you attended church and sacrament very regularly; and if, since then, you have been a little remiss in your duty, yet it is to be hoped you will remember in due time, properly to return to it, and that you will die a good man; and it cannot be expected that people should be so strict in religion while they have to rise in the world.

Far. Ah! I well remember, when the old Bishop came round our parts in those days, how Mr. Blind-man, in whose parish I then lived, told us, that our Godfathers and Godmothers were to answer for what we had done before; but that, after we were confirmed, we were all to stand upon *our own bottom*: and this frightened me *desperate* for a while; and away I went and bought myself the *Whole Duty of Man*, Nelson’s *Fast and Festivals*, the *New Week’s Preparation*, and Taylor’s *Holy Living and Dying*; and for about two months, in my way, I kept to my religion very strict; till just about that time the old Lord Rakish would have a *merry-making*; because his son came of age: and many a resolution I made that I would not go after such *nonsenses*; but when I

was told that young Parson Purbblind, Mr. Blindman's curate, was riding by with some other young sparks of the day, who were going there, I thought, for sure, *parsons* must know better than I, and that there could be no great harm if I went too. So, because I would not make myself particular, away I went, and there I got *deadly* drunk; and as I came home, I fell off my horse. (Lord have mercy on me, had I died in that state!) But, after that, I was ashamed to think of my religion; and as to my books of devotion, I soon laid them all aside; and to this day they are quite as fresh as though they were just bought out of the bookseller's shop: and there was an end to all my religion till I heard Mr. Lovegood.

Dolit. Well, but Mr. Littleworth, as you have got these good books still by you, why can't you *in moderation*, again take to religion, and do your duty, without taking up this *new way*?

Far. Why, Sir, to speak the truth, I have not till of late discovered that the heart, the seat of all my actions, is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and that till God sets that right, nothing can or will be right. This has been the cause why this world, which I must now soon leave, was all my delight, while my heart neither knew God, nor desired to know him. Sir, I am ashamed to say what a wicked, worldly, negligent sinner I have been all the days of my life! [Farmer weeps.]

Mrs. Lit. Now, only see, Sir, how mopish and melancholy these new notions in religion have made my husband! I am afraid, at times, he'll lose his senses!

Dolit. Indeed, Mrs. Littleworth, I am very sorry for your husband; he is a *good-hearted man at bottom*. Do you never try to divert him?

Miss Polly. Divert him, Sir! Why, when my uncle and aunt, and two of our cousins, came to see us the

other day, (we always used to have a little *harmless-mirth*) only, because my mother, and Patty, and I proposed to have a game or two of cards, away my father and sister Nancy ran out of the house, as though it had been on fire; and down they went to Mr. Lovegood's and *said prayers!*

Far. Now do, Sir, hear me patiently. Thus have I lived, "without God in the world," neglectful of my precious soul, and forgetful of Christ, my only Saviour, till I am turned of sixty. I am ashamed to say what a sinner I have been, and how unfit I am to die!

Dolit. Well, but Mr. Littleworth, why should you run from one extreme to another? you know the old proverb, "Extremes are dangerous;" and there is moderation in all things: and, you know I have a sermon on that text,—“Let your moderation be known unto all men.”

Far. Why, Sir, you have been our justice these eleven years; and when bad people are brought before you, I am sure you do much better in your office than to preach up to them such sort of moderation. You never tell thieves that they should be *moderately honest*; or drunkards (and the Lord knows we have enough of them) that they should be *moderately sober*; or the many bad people that throw themselves upon our parish, for the support of their base-born children, that they should be *moderately chaste*; and no such words did I ever hear from your pulpit, as that men should be *moderately moral*. Now, if this is not to be allowed in *morality*, how are we to make it out in *religion*, when we are commanded to “love the Lord with *all* our heart, mind, soul, and strength?” Does it mean, that we are to have a *moderate* love to God? and when we are enjoined to love our neighbour as ourselves, does it mean a *moderate* love to mankind? And pray Sir, should I repent..

moderately, pray *moderately*, and have a *moderate* trust in God? If so, I really cannot understand the Scriptures, which say, that I am to "give ALL diligence to make my calling and election sure;" that religion "is the one thing needful," for which I am to "forsake all that I have, that I may be Christ's disciple;" and that I must strive (or, as Mr. Lovegood says, it means *agonize*) to enter in at the strait gate.

Dolit. You need not be so critical, Sir; I only mean, you shall not be so over-zealous in religion.

Far. Why, I confess, as I have lately taken to read my Bible, I think it is there said, "It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing."

Dolit. Now this is too bad, Mr. Littleworth. Don't you think I know the Bible as well as you? Ring the bell, Miss Polly. I shan't stop here any longer to be told my duty, when I have been so long minister of this parish.

Far. Why, Sir, I did not know that I was telling you your duty: I only meant to observe, that I could not understand what you meant about moderation in religion; but if I pressed the point too far, I beg your pardon for it.

Dolit. Well, Sir, I have before said, I'll keep my temper if I can; but this cannot be done, unless you keep up proper manners while you chuse to talk to me about your new religion.

Far. Well, Sir, as to my new religion, as you call it, I do really confess, since I have heard Mr. Lovegood, my thoughts about these matters are wonderfully altered; and I will tell you in the most *man-nerly fashion* in my power, how it came about. You know, I have an honest fellow works with me, Thomas Newman; and it is to admiration what a sober, orderly, decent, christian-like man he is! and his wife is the nicest, tidiest woman I ever met with in

all my *born* days: and at different times, when I talked to him, I found that he had not only religion in his practice, but his Bible *at his finger's ends*. How I was ashamed of my ignorance when I heard him talk! But this made me determine to go to hear what sort of a parson he so much admired; for I remember the time when he was wild enough.

Dolit. Truly, Mr. Littleworth, it is a fine compliment to me, that you should go to one of your day-labourers to be instructed in religion.

Far. Why, Sir, if I may be so bold as to say, that though learning is a good thing, yet it does not always make a good man; and that a poor man may have the grace of God in his heart, without having much learning in his head. And did not our Lord mean something of the same kind, when he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes!"

Dolit. And so all the time and money that we have been spending at the university, has been of no sort of service; and every ignorant enthusiast that pretends to inspiration, is to tell us the meaning of the Bible.

Far. 'Las! Sir, did I speak against human learning? It is well known that Mr. Lovegood is one of the *learnedest* men for twenty miles round; though I have heard him say, That human learning, to a man spiritually blind, does no more good than a lighted candle does to a man that is naturally blind: and, I dare say, Sir, when you read the Homilies, you remember these words, "Man's human and worldly wisdom or sense, is not needful to the understanding of the scriptures, BUT THE REVELATION OF THE HOLY GHOST, WHICH INSPIRETH THE TRUE MEANING INTO THEM, THAT WITH HUMILITY AND DILIGENCE DO SEARCH THEREFOR*."—And the Lord

* Homily on reading the Scriptures.

grant that I may have a little of that blessed inspiration ! for I am sure we need it.

Dolit. Now, I am sure, Mr. Littleworth, you must have misrepresented their words ; I never can believe that they wrote so enthusiastically as all that.

Far. No indeed, Sir ; they are just as fresh, and as pat in my memory, as though I had read them but yesterday. But so it was, Sir, that Thomas's good life and talk made me determine to go and hear Mr. Lovegood ; and my daughter Nance went with me ; and when I came to the church, I prayed to the Lord, that as he had made Thomas so good a man, so I might be made a better man ; for I am sure there was room for me to mend : and a fine sermon he made (all *off hand*) from those words, " You cannot serve God and Mammon."

Dolit. And pray, Sir, why could not my sermons, as well as his, have made you a better man ? I know that such extemporaneous effusions please ignorant and vulgar minds, that are fond of gaping after novelty ; but I am not ashamed of the sound and sober sermons I have been preaching among you, ever since I have been your rector.

Far. Why, Sir, did I find fault with you, or any one else ? I was only about to tell you how I was struck with Mr. Lovegood's sermon ; for I certainly thought he made it all for me : and I actually asked Thomas if he had not been telling him about me. But he declared he could not have been so bold to his minister against his master ; and then he said to me, that Mr. Lovegood could tell any one's heart from the knowledge he had of his own, and the word of God.

Dolit. Why, then, I suppose when all other trades fail, he'll turn *fortune-teller* ?

Far. I cannot say as to that Sir, though, I am sure, he told my fortune plain enough that day ; for

I thought he turned me inside out, while he shewed me what a fallen worldly-minded creature I was.

Dolit. Yes; and all these preachers run on just in the same way. If any of us step a little aside, we are to hear of nothing but hell and damnation; and for every innocent infirmity, man is to be painted out as black as the Devil.

Far. Why, Sir, to my way of thinking, both the Bible, and Common Prayer-Book, and the Articles of Religion, just say the same; and they say, all you clergy subscribe to them a many times over before you come to your livings.

Mrs. Lit. Yes, Sir, and my husband has brought home such a heap of books and prayers from his new *parson* about the articles and *homicles*, I think he calls them, and Common Prayer-Book! Then he tells us, that his is the old religion of the church; and he wants to read all these books over to us. He has got a book of prayers made by an old Bishop*, that he says, was of his way of thinking: and now wants us to kneel down, to say prayers to us, before we go to bed. But how can we have time for all these devotions in our way of living?

Dolit. Why, you are very right there, Mrs. Littleworth. If you do your duty well on a Sunday, and have a family prayer on a Sunday evening; and say some good rational prayers to yourselves before you go to bed on a week-day, God Almighty, who is very merciful, and forbids us to be righteous overmuch, cannot expect more from you, in your line of life.

Miss Polly. There, Father! I hope you will be guided by what Mr. Dolittle says, and not be led so much by your *homicles* and new religion.

Dolit. Why, Mr. Littleworth, you know I spent many years at Oxford; and there I'll assure you, I

was not inattentive to the study of divinity under Dr. Blunderbuss, a man of approved religion in those days (though since then I have heard of a Mr. Brightman, and some others, who have adopted your notions of religion :) yet it was not only his opinion, but that of many other learned and orthodox divines, that though our reformers were well-meaning men, yet they were not over-wise in religion : and that though religion, in the opinion of some, is now less practised, yet it is more improved ; for we live in a very learned day. And our clergy now-a-days don't confine themselves to a few abstruse notions of those old divines, but make their sermons out of a variety of the most excellent moral writings that ever were composed, from among those we call heathens, but who had a deal of the light of nature, and knew much about natural religion ; and they make the Bible much more intelligible. Master Littleworth, if I may give my advice, I would not wish you to be over-nice, nor over-wise in your religion. Do your duty as well as you can ; and if you fail, trust in the Almighty's mercies. The rational clergy, in our day, know very well that there is a new sect, who puzzle people's minds about the terms *original sin*, the *atonement*, *regeneration*, *imputed righteousness*, and I know not what notions besides, which I am sure you need not mind, provided you do your duty without affecting to be more righteous than your neighbours. However Mr. Lovegood may pretend to be wiser than the rest of us, yet, if you will take our advice, according to the Scriptures, and "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God," I am sure you need not fear. To be sure, Sir, you have not forgot my sermon on that text, which I have never failed preaching to you, year by year, ever since I was inducted into the living.

Far. Ah ! but, Sir, that very text cuts me quite up ; for first, I confess the many tricks and fibs I

have been guilty of at market ; so that I have not done justly : and I have been as bad at mercy, for I always loved myself better than my poor neighbours : and then, with regard to walking humbly with my God, never did any man strut about at market like a *braggadocia* more than I have done : and as to humbling myself before God in prayer, or by repentance, I was as ignorant of these things as I am of the learning of an Oxford *schollard*. As for our articles, homilies, and prayer-book, let *folks* be ever so wise and learned now-a-days, they seem to me to have been made by men wonderfully knowing in the Scriptures : for they not only explain to us what hearts we have by nature ; but how mercifully we poor sinners are to be saved, through Jesus Christ our only Redeemer. And it is all laid out to admiration in a little book, given me by Mr. Lovegood, called “ The Good Old Way ;” and it was there that I think I see my picture just as it is in the 9th article, on the Fall of Man ; where it is said, in a wonderful wise way, that “ Every man, of his own nature, is inclined to evil ; and that every person born into this world, deserves God’s wrath and damnation.”

Mrs. Lit. There, Sir ; this is the way my husband would be talking, morning, noon, and night, if we chose to hear him, in his uncharitable way, about all of us deserving God’s wrath and damnation.

Dolit. But, Mr. Littleworth, if we are not quite so good as we should be in our present *laps’d* state, we may all make ourselves better, if we please.

Far. Why, Sir, it appears to me that “ men *chuse* darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil ;” and that no bad man can have a good choice, or will, till God changes the heart : and though I cannot say any thing as to the learning of the old men that made our church-books, yet to me it appears sure and certain, as they say in the next ar-

ticle, That the condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he *cannot turn and prepare himself* by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore, we have *no power* to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, “without the grace of God, by Christ, preventing us, that we may have a good-will, and working with us when we have that good-will.” And though, I confess, I have not minded the prayers so much as I should have done, yet I remember having heard you say from the desk, “Almighty God, who seeth we have *no power* of ourselves to help ourselves; and that, through the weakness of our mortal natures, *we can do no good thing* without God; and the frailty of man without God, *cannot but fail.*” And I remember, when my school-mistress taught me the catechism, she used to say to me, “My good child know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and serve him, without his *special grace.*”

Dolit. Why, if you take all these words in such a strict sense, you will make us out to be mere machines! and then it is no matter what we do, for I am sure there can be no merit in our goodness.

Far. Ah! why Sir, how can there be any merit in such poor services as ours? I can't help thinking with our *old folk* in the article of the justification of man, that “We are accounted righteous before God *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ *by faith*, and *not for our own works or deservings*; wherefore, that we are justified *by faith ONLY*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.” And then they tell us the same in the homily “of the salvation of mankind by *only Christ our Saviour*,” in which the doctrine is more largely expressed: and there they give a *deadly stroke* at our

pride in that they say; "Because all men be sinners against God, and breakers of his law, therefore *can no man, by his own acts, works, or deeds, seem they never so good, be justified and made righteous before God*; but every man of necessity is constrained to seek for *another righteousness for justification*: our justification doth come *freely of the mere mercy of God*, so that Christ is now *the righteousness of all them that truly do believe in him*, for he paid the ransom by his death, he for them fulfilled the law in his life." And then, Sir, we may say with a good conscience, "O Lord, who seest we put not our trust in *any thing that we do*." And when I went about two Sundays ago to the holy sacrament, at Mr. Lovegood's church, and (to my shame be it spoken,) old as I am, to the sacrament I never went before, excepting twice after I was confirmed; and then we prayed, that God would not "weigh our merits, but pardon our offences;" and here,—[Mr. Dolittle interrupts.]

Dolit. Stop, Mr. Littleworth, before you tell us any more of the prayers, I must tell you, that Mr. Lovegood is liable to a severe ecclesiastical censure for administering the sacrament to one of my parishioners. And—[Farmer interrupts.]

Far. But as old master Goodenough has left Mr. Lovegood's parish to come to your sacrament, I dare say you'll forgive him; and I am sure he'll forgive you.

Miss Polly. But, Sir, my father talks so frivolous and, *thusiastically* about inspiration, and says, that the Bishops, and all the clergy, have declared, that they were "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost," before they went into orders; and I have heard you preach against such *'thusiasts* again and again*.

* Miss Polly brought home with her several other hard words from the boarding school, that she never afterwards knew how to digest, or to express.

Far. Ah, Polly, you should not talk so *pert* to your father! When I could bluster about the house as once I did, you did not behave so *unmannerly*. [To Mr. Dolittle.] But you know, Sir, how very often we pray for the Spirit of God in the prayer-book, that "God would grant us his Holy Spirit;" that he would "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit." We pray for his Majesty, that he may be "replenished with the grace of the Holy Spirit;" and that all the bishops and clergy may have the healthful Spirit of God's grace." And at Christmas time, we pray, "that we being regenerate and born again, and made God's children by adoption and grace, may be daily renewed by his Holy Spirit:" and in another collect, that "God would send to us his Holy Ghost to comfort us;" and then in the article of our predestination and election, it is said, that "all the elect *feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ*." And in the Catechism, that God "sanctifies us, and all the elect people of God." And in twenty more places besides, have we the same sort of words and doctrine. And to me, it seems, it would be even foolish to pray at all, unless we thought that God would inspire into our hearts the good we pray for.

Dolit. Well, master Littleworth, if you have done *preaching* to me, it is high time that I should begin *preaching* to you. I have already observed, that our reformers were good men, but not over-wise; and that they may have expressed themselves unguardedly; therefore many of our divines of the present day, and I'll assure you most of them are bishops or deans, or other great dignitaries, have been at a deal of pains to put a proper explanation on their words; and though, I confess, they have hardly as yet settled the matter among themselves, yet it seems to amount to this. Some of them think, that our

Reformers had a *double meaning* in all they said, and that they speak both ways, for and against the same doctrine, at the same time. Others are of opinion, that they had but one meaning, which is to be understood *just the contrary to what they say*. They who are for the *double meaning* suppose, that while some are at liberty to take them in *one sense*, yet others are at liberty also to take them in *the opposite sense*; and though, to the ignorant and the unlearned, this may appear a flat contradiction and nonsense, yet many learned divines have written very ably on this side of the question; though I confess, in my opinion, it gives too much latitude to those modern preachers that you are now so fond of, to preach up their notions; and very specious things to be sure, they have to say, if we let this interpretation pass. I am rather, therefore, of the opinion of those divines who have proved that our reformers, when *they said one thing meant another*. And if you please, Sir, I'll explain myself on this subject.

Far. 'Las, Sir, you quite stagger me! I don't know whether I stand upon my head or my heels.

Dolit. Don't say so, Sir, for I'll assure you we are serious, and we can prove all this to be very true from the logic some of us brought from Oxford, and others of us from Cambridge. And thus, when we read in the article about *original*, or birth-sin, "That it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is *very far** gone from original righteousness;" it is evidently to be made out by *the rule of reverse*; therefore, according to the opinion of our modern divines, there is a deal of original inherent rectitude in man, if he would but employ his reason, and his conscience, to bring it forth.

* In the original Latin, *Quam longissime, as far as possible*.

Far. Though I dare not contradict the learned, yet I am sure my hardened conscience and my blinded reason never did me any good.

Dolit. You should not have interrupted me, Sir, till I had finished what I had to say; for I must remind you of what you said about the necessity of "special grace;" that we have "no power of ourselves, to help ourselves," and therefore "of ourselves we cannot but fall;" that "we have no power to do works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us:" now for want of *our logic*, it cannot be expected you can comprehend that these expressions are to be understood by the same *rule of reverse*; and that *now* their proper meaning is, that there is a deal of power left in us, though in our lapsed state; and that nothing is wanting, but for God to *second* our good endeavours; and that, through our own proper resolutions and endeavours, if duly attended to, we shall obtain the favour of the Almighty.

Far. Why, then, Sir, when I tell Sam, that he is to fetch the black horse out of the stable, he must understand he is to bring me the grey mare. Why, I am all in amazement at this new sort of *larning*.

Mrs. Little. Nancy, my dear, hand that fresh toast to Mr. Dolittle. [To Mr. Dolittle.] Perhaps, Sir, you would like a bit more with your last dish. [Miss Nancy directly takes it into the kitchen, and comes back without it.]

Mrs. Little. Why Nancy, child, what have you done with the toast?

Nancy. As you bade me, mother.

Mrs. Little. Why, I told you to hand it to Mr. Dolittle.

Nancy. O yes, mother; but then by this new *rule of reverse*, I thought I was to take it away, and lock it up in the pantry.

Dolit. O, but we are not to adopt this rule of reverse in things temporal, but only in things spiritual. It is upon this principle that our divines have it in their power farther to prove, in the justification of man by *faith alone*, that it means by *faith and good works together*; nor should you pretend to be so wise about the matter, but humbly to leave it to your clergy, and believe, as they direct you; for it should seem very strange, that after these abstruse divines have puzzled even the most learned among us about “works done before justification, and works done after justification,” that you should be able to understand their meaning.

Far. Why then, Sir, when I say I shall go alone to Mapleton market next Thursday, you are to understand that I mean to take my wife and daughter Polly with me. Is this the way in which I am to *chop* this *new-fashioned* logic?

Dolit. I am sorry for you, Mr. Littleworth: if you can't understand, yet at least you should submit to the learning of our university divines. I fear you will never be reclaimed, for you mentioned also, among other subjects, the article upon our predestination and election. Now *all* our learned divines can prove that article also is to be understood in a sense which is directly contrary to its plain meaning; and that, when it is said, “The godly consideration of our predestination in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as fell in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ;” it means, that it was a very ungodly doctrine, and calculated to encourage the most licentious conduct: that the words “sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort,” *now* mean every thing that is abominably detestable and odious, and only held forth by a modern sect, now sunk into general execration. In short, that the predestination of some, means an uni-

versal *chance* given to all. And further still, when it is said, "that the elect of God feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ," we are to understand, that there are no such feelings or influences ; or that, if there are, according to an expression that we are very fond of using, they must be secret and *imperceptible* feelings.

Far. 'Las, Sir, where am I? secret and imperceptible feelings !—[Farmer to his wife.] Why, dame, when our son Harry would be so wild, and when he went to sea, and you and I used to sob and cry together night after night, ours was not imperceptible grief. [To Mr. Dolittle.] And when we repent of sin, for I am sure we have enough of it, are we to have *imperceptible* repentance; and when we tell God our wants in prayer, are those to be *imperceptible* wants? Are we to have *imperceptible* love to God? and *imperceptible* faith in Christ? I should wish to have something better than an *imperceptible* religion, otherwise I should fear I shall have nothing better than an *imperceptible* heaven. Really, Sir, I am in such amaze by these new notions, that I know not where I am. But as you say, I am to understand all our *old folk* by the rule of reverse, perhaps I am to understand you by the same rule, and that will turn all matters right round.

Dolit. Master Littleworth, it is very cruel and unjust in you to banter us by such language; you know how many people there are against our religion already: First, Dissenters of every party are saying that we subscribe a creed for the sake of our livings, which we never examined or believed. But who would mind what these *Schismatics* have to say against us? for all the infidels say just the same; and as for the new sect that you have lately taken to follow, they are worse than any of them.

Far. Well, then, Sir, I must honestly confess,

whatsoever your accusers may be, I wonder that so many of you gentlemen should again and again subscribe to all these things, as though you had a right to understand them in a sense just opposite to their real sense, and thus make nonsense of the whole of it; while you subscribe them as being "articles agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops, and all the clergy," for "avoiding diversity of opinions," and "for the establishment of *consent* touching religion;" and which you say are to be taken in *the literal and grammatical sense*. Aye, Sir, and run down those ministers whose hands and hearts go together, and who will have nothing to do with those double meanings, and double dealings so contrary to all the common-sense meaning of words, as that all we, farmer-like *countrified* folk, cannot but see how little agreement there is between hands and hearts in all these subscriptions. Lord help us! is this the simplicity and godly sincerity of the upright christian?

Dolit. O Sir, you seem to be struck with the spirit of devotion; you'll go to prayer with us next.

Far. O no, Sir! I would rather leave that with you. Nancy, my child, reach Mr. Dolittle the Bible; it will be more profitable to us all, if he reads a chapter, and expounds it, and goes to prayer with us, and that is the way Mr. Lovegood does when he goes a visiting.

Dolit. I have been now rector of this parish above these nineteen years, and I never was addressed about going to prayer in such a manner before. Sir, this rude treatment compels me to leave your house immediately.—Mrs. Littleworth, I wish you a good night.—Young ladies, your humble servant.

DIALOGUE V.



Between Farmer LITTLEWORTH, Mr. BRISK (Mr. DOLITTLE's Curate), Mr. SMIRKING (Assistant to Dr. DRONISH), and the Farmer's Family.



ON THE EVIL NATURE AND EFFECTS OF STAGE PLAYS.

Sam, the Farmer's Footboy comes Home from Mapleton, in the evening, after an Affray at a Public House.

Miss Nancy. FATHER, here is Sam come home from Mapleton with such a bruised face, bloody handkerchief, and his livery all over dirt. He appears to be half drunk : and the lantern is broken all to bits !

Farmer. What can he have been at ? Why don't he come in ?

Miss N. He is only stopping to scrape off some of the dirt, and to wash himself in the back kitchen.

[Sam comes in.]

Far. Why, Sam, in the name of wonder where have you been, to come home in this condition ?

Sam. O master ! if you will forgive me, I'll tell you all about it.

Far. Forgive you ! why, what have you been doing ? Tell the truth first, and after that I'll tell you whether I shall forgive you.

Sam. Why, master, when my young Mistresses were at Mr. Lightman's the lawyer's, at tea, in came Mr. Brisk and Mr. Smirking, and made an agreement that they should all go to the play.

Far. Aye ; I thought by their whisperings and dressings that they had some such project in their

heads. But how came you in such a pickle, young man?

Sám. Sir, my young Mistresses gave me sixpence to go to the Nag's Head, that I might not stand out in the cold, while they were all at the play; and there Squire Bluster's footman, and Lord Rakish's *gentleman*, did nothing but *jeer* my young mistresses, by asking, which they understood best, dancing or making butter and cheese? And then they sneer'd and jeer'd at their dress.

Far. Why did you not let them sneer and jeer on, and go away about your business?

Sam. Why, I thought I must stop and spend my sixpence. And then they began their *romance* on me, and asked how many more of the plow boys the farmer had put in livery? And I said to them, *as how*, they might have been plow-boys once, as well as I. Then they swore desperate oaths at me, and would make me drink; and said, I should run the gauntlet; then they knocked me down; and as soon as I could, I ran away as fast as I was able; but they followed me into the street, and would bring me back again, but I would not come, so they rolled me in the dirt, and beat me sadly; and the whole street was in an uproar; and the lantern was broke all to *smash*.

Far. Oh, Nancy, my child; what a mercy from God it is, that we are not in "the broad way that leadeth unto destruction," and that we have now the Bible before us!

Miss Nancy. A mercy indeed, father! for, till we went to hear Mr. Lovegood, we were all alike. The Lord be praised for his grace!

[After some other conversation, in come the two ministers and the two daughters.]

Brisk. Well, Sir, we have brought home ~~your~~ daughters quite safe and sound; tho' I am afraid it is

a little later than your usual time for supper and bed.

Far. Oh, no Sir; for sometimes I come home almost as late as this, when I come from the lecture at Mr. Lovegood's church. And for sure, my daughters can have been in no bad ways when they have been with men of your cloth; tho' Sam has told me a strange story.

Brisk. Why, I confess, Mr. Littleworth, it was I that persuaded your daughters to go to the play. I am sure it is a very innocent and rational amusement.

Far. I can't thank you for that, Sir; for while you was at the playhouse, Sam, and ever so many other servants were at the alehouse; and he is come home in a fine trim.

Miss Polly. But, father, may'nt the gentlemen have a bit of supper for their kindness in bringing us home?

Far. Aye, aye, child, I have no objection against that.—Dame, see what there is in the pantry. Nancy, help your mother to bring it out.

[It is done accordingly.]

Far. Will one of you gentlemen ask a blessing.

[Mr. Brisk says a careless grace.]

Far. And pray, gentlemen, did you ask a blessing before you went to the play, and took my daughters with you; and can you return thanks to God now you are come away; for "in every thing we should give thanks."

Smirking. Why, Sir, how came that thought into your head?

Far. I had it from the Bible. And for sure, you gentlemen, can't be so ignorant of that book, as not to know, that you ministers are directed to "give yourselves continually unto prayer." And that all of us shou'd "pray always, with all prayer and suppli-

cation in the Spirit ;" that we should " continue-instant in prayer;" yea, that we should " pray without ceasing."

Smir. But, Sir, if you take these texts in so strict a sense, how is the business of the world to be carried on?

Far. Why, the sense in which I take these words is, that we should live in such a holy habit and frame of mind, as to be at all times in a fit state for prayer; and that we can be looking up to God in frequent prayer while we are at our daily labour. And I am sure, when this is the case, the world will go on a thousand times better than it does at present.

Brisk. Well Sir, such a frame of mind is not amiss, especially *at the latter end of our lives.*

Far. However you, gentlemen, would advise us to put off these things till the latter end of our lives, while God's word directs us to " be always ready;" yet you ministers are instructed to give " yourselves wholly to these things, that your profiting may appear unto all men." Now, pray Sir, if any of the people had been taken for death, and had sent for you to pray with them, and to administer the holy sacrament to them, how would you have felt in your devotions, after having heard so much of the profane stuff and nonsense they talk over at these plays? What sort of prayers would yours have been? Could you have drawn " near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," before a holy God?

Smir. I must leave you Mr. Brisk, to answer that question; for being co-pastor with Dr. Dronish, among the *rational Dissenters*, we are not in the habit of being called upon on these occasions; but these things should be no bar against a candid and liberal intercourse with each other; for in all the principal points of religion we seem very well agreed.

Brisk. Why, Mr. Littleworth, that is not a probable case.

Far. But, in my opinion, it is a very probable case. And I did hear of one minister who was called out of a Puppet Shew, to go to prayer with a man who was likely to die; and in every parish there always must be some who are sick, and near their end. If you are not sent for oftener than you are, it is because your negligence has made them as careless as yourselves, even to their dying moments; and no wonder that they think so little of the prayers of such ministers who pray so little for themselves.

Smir. Mr. Brisk, I believe we had better walk home, for Mr. Littleworth seems quite angry.

Far. No, no, gentlemen, I am not angry; though I confess I am grieved at heart that my daughters should have been led to such places by gentlemen of your profession, where, I am sure, they could get nothing but wickedness. I always was hospitable to my neighbours; and you are welcome to stop, and I wish you would, that we may talk over matters before my daughters; for to speak plainly, your example hardens them much in their vain ways.

Smir. Why, truly Sir, I thank you for your civility, but I think, from the dreary notions of religion you have lately adopted, you have taken up such high prejudices against plays as are not just; for, in many plays, there are fine lessons of morality, if we would but attend to them.

Far. Ah, and they are all the worse for that, as it makes the wicked things in them go down the more *glib*. And we suppose we have a licence to hear all the foolish and lewd stories and blasphemous romances, because they are *messed up* with a little morality? Pray, Sir, do the people that go to those places, go after religion and morality, or after vanity and mirth?

Brisk. Why, Sir, we go after a little innocent amusement to be sure. And if we do hear of bad things we need not practise them.

Far. But do they, whose hearts are good and upright, think that they are at liberty to go after things that are bad? Or if I hear things which are bad, is that likely to make me good? Besides, I am directed to "cease to hear the instruction that causeth us to err." Pray, did either of you, gentlemen, ever find that wicked people, at any time, were made more moral by following these loose fellows, who go romancing about the country with their plays and morality?

Smir. I don't know that we have. But they might have been the better, if they would; for I still maintain it, that there are plays which contain excellent *strokes* of morality.

Far. Well, if I am to go after their nonsense and ribaldry for the sake of their morality, I might also expect to be made a better man, if I should hire some wicked wretch to curse and blaspheme, and use all manner of filthy foolish talk, made up of lewdness, craft, and pride, provided I had one of you gentlemen at my elbow, to give me a little of your morality at the same time. But, I should be glad to hear by what law we go, when we attend such abominable pastimes, and use such wicked language. Have either of you, gentlemen, any right to tell us a set of vain, filthy, romancing stories, and every now and then bring out a shocking oath, and then mess it up with a little morality for our instruction?

Smir. Oh, no, Mr. Littleworth, we did not say so!

Far. Why, then, did you do right in hiring all these loose blades to do it before you?

Brisk. Sir, this is very uncharitable; for, if they said these bad words, we did not hire them for that purpose.

Far. Yes; but you knew they would come in with the general bargain; and all the profane foolish people, up and down the country, were there to hear them. And how must this harden them in their sins when they saw so many ministers with them, at their wretched sport. So that I am sorry to tell you, (for I am an old man and must speak the truth,) you have been "sitting in the seat of the scornful, and attending the councils of the ungodly;" and the Lord help me! how grieved I am that my daughters, whom I brought up in such a vain way in my thoughtless state, should have been with you!

Smir. By your account, Sir, one would think these men do nothing but curse and swear *all* the time.

Far. Pray, Sir, do they curse and swear *any* of the time?

Smir. Yes; I confess, I now and then hear some such expressions. But then they are only meant as embellishments; and after all, with a moral intent to expose the wickedness of such words.

Far. Expose such wickedness!—Why, what can give it such countenance, when all the people round about come together. *Gentlefolks*, Justices and Parsons, attend all the time giggling and laughing while such oaths are swearing. But what did you mean, Sir, by '*bellishments*? I did not understand that hard word?

Smir. Sir, I meant ornaments.

Far. Well, this is to admiration, that oaths are ornaments! But you say, these are sworn but now and then. So, you think, we may go to places where people swear but a little. Now, to my way of thinking, we should be in no company but with such as mind our Lord's words, "Swear not at all."

Brisk. Why, if ever they do swear, they always cover it very decently; they only say *damme*, *gad-*

zounds, and such sort of words. And they mean nothing by it.

Far. Why, that they mean nothing by the whole of it, for it is nothing better than a pack of *make-believe* nonsense, there is no doubt. But you clergy know, that taking the Lord's name in vain means the making use of his holy name in a vain manner. And, I am sure, it cannot be done in a *vainer* manner than it is done on the stage; especially in their profane mock devotions, even upon their knees, which are ten thousand times more blasphemous than their oaths.

Smir. Well, I confess, I wish they would lay aside such exclamations; for these sort of amusements would be quite as good, and as rational, without them. But where is the harm of the word *zounds*? it is a word without any meaning.

Far. To be sure, that is a famous excuse for them! for all their words, in a sense, are words without meaning. For all their fine shews are nothing better than sham and nonsense: but the word *zounds* is a most desperate profane oath indeed. It means, *by God's wounds*; and I thought, for sure, you gentlemen had sufficient *larning* to have known that.

Smir. O, Sir! it is only an old expression, invented in the times of popery, when people believed in the divinity of our Saviour, and the atonement;—but these doctrines are now universally exploded among the *rational* Dissenters. And you know Mr. Brisk, many of the clergy also are of our sentiment in regard to these points.

Far. The infidel Dissenters you mean, Sir.

Miss Polly. Lord, father, how you talk! Surely Mr. Smirking will be affronted.

Far. Ah! my child, I find you have not been to that wicked school for nothing; for so many times as I have told you of it, yet you still take "the Lord's name in vain."

Smir. Well, Sir, I can't see that we should give up the fine sentiments, that are generally held out on these occasions; I still maintain it, that the stage, when properly conducted, is a very rational amusement.

Far. In my vain days, when I attended these places, I know not what I, or any one else, went there for unless to make game, and to kill time, as we most wickedly used to call it. The Lord knows, that bad I went there, and worse, I am sure, I came away, for, as to all the wicked things I heard there, they stuck to my heart like burrs to my worsted stockings; and as to the morality, that all ran off as fast as it came on, like fair water from a duck's back.

Smir. O, but then you did not consider the proper intent of them! for they are designed to shew the deformity of vice, and lash the follies of mankind.

Far. I thought that was the office of you ministers; and for sure you cannot want the help of a set of strolling players to assist you in reforming your neighbours. But can either of you, gentlemen, in your consciences think so? When vicious people get exposed and lashed, they are ashamed to face it out; they will never stand their ground. But where do all these sort of people run to? Why, to the playhouse. And what do they go there for? Because it feeds and pampers their vanity and pride, while they make a downright *merriment* of sin. And as to the stories they trump up on these occasions, it is wonderful that any modest woman will go to hear them. I am ashamed to think how many different lewd tricks and projects I have heard from them, dressed up almost in every shape. In short, nothing is such *nuts* for them as that which sets them all a laughing at adultery and whoredom. Thus, "fools make a mock

at sin';" and it is a pity such gentlemen as you should "follow the multitude to do evil."

Mrs. Lit. Why, though I don't like my husband being so over religious, yet I cannot but agree with him, that it would be much better if our daughters would but stay at home and mind their business, and not waste their time in running after such *wonderments*. I do not think my son Harry would have turned out so bad, if he could have been kept away from such sort of company.

Far. Ah, that was one of the first things which brought on the *ruination* of my boy. It was there he got instructed in all the wicked ways of the world; and being so ignorant and careless myself, as I then was, I could not have the face to correct him. Oh how I deserve the punishment of old Eli! For "my son made himself vile, and I restrained him not."—Lord, forgive me, and grant that I may once more see him back again from sea! I hope to the Lord, that I may be able to say something to him for his good, and may God change his heart!

Miss Nancy. Mother, have you got the key of the back pantry? for Sam is terribly bruised, and we are going to bathe his cheeks and side with some hot verjuice. [Mrs. Littleworth gives the key.]

Far. Now, all this riot and wickedness comes of these abominable pastimes, whether out of doors, or in, it is just as bad; nothing but uproar and confusion all the town over. While every 'prentice and servant man and maid is tempted to run away from their families, to which they belong; and then away they go to these schools of wickedness, and come home at dark night, fit for the practice of every abominable vice that comes in their way. Thus business is neglected; the common people are robbed both of their morals and their money, while the pawnbroker and alehouse-keeper live on the spoil.

And these are your innocent amusements, gentlemen.

Smir. Now, after all that you have said, bad people will make a bad use of every thing: but that don't prove things to be bad in themselves.

Brisk. I am quite of your opinion, Mr. Smirking, for there is nothing against these things in scripture; nay, there is a time for all things, even a time to dance; and we should regard the scriptures.

Far. With all my heart, Sir, I shall be glad to come to that touchstone. We are commanded to search the scriptures.—Patty reach the Bible.

Patty. Why, father, the gentlemen have scarce done supper; you cannot want the Bible yet.

Far. Nay, nay, girl, we have been talking all the time, as most people do over their meals, and talking about religion won't choke us any more than about politics and the world.

Smir. We have both done supper, Sir, and it begins to be late.

Far. It is not wholesome to rise so soon after meals; and you love a glass of wine after supper. [Dame, reach us a nice bottle of your best currant wine.] (To Mr. Smirking) Sir, gentlemen in your way love a pipe, shall Patty bring you one?

Smir. No, I thank you, Sir; it begins to be late.

Far. Now, let us have the Bible. (Nancy brings it.)

Miss Nancy. Father, I can shew all the places we turned down, while my sisters and the ministers were at the play; which Mr. Lovegood made use of when he preached against these wickednesses.

Far. Well, then, let us see: Here is Eph. iv. 29. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." [To the Ministers]—Did the play run in that style to-night, gentlemen?

Brisk. Go on Sir; we will answer you by and by.

Far. Why then, it is said, "That for every idle word men shall speak they shall give an account in the day of judgment." Why, Nancy, it would not do for you and me to die in a playhouse; for there is nothing else but idle words there. And then again, we are forbidden "foolish talking and jesting, which is not convenient." And there we have nothing else but foolish talking and jesting all the way through; aye, and if possible, worse still; for if they present us with any good, they are almost sure to make a scoff at it; and as for pride, anger, revenge, and such like passions, these they dress up in such a manner as though there was little or no evil in them, and as though nobody could live without them.—In a thousand instances they represent virtue to be vice, and vice to be virtue, or it would not be so pleasing to the sort of customers who attend them. After this, you know, Mr. Lovegood mentioned that text against "profane and vain babblings;" and their babblings are profane enough, I am sure; and these we are "to avoid." And here it is again, "Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." And here again, "Our conversation is in heaven."

Nancy. And you know, father, it is said, "that the righteous soul of Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." And I am sure, in all the plays that you and I have seen, there is enough of the filthy conversation of the wicked.

Far. But Nancy, we must not forget that text which pins it all down to a point, which Mr. Lovegood explained to us against these abominable doings, in Gal. v. 19—22. in which, after a long list of wickednesses forbidden to all christians, "revellings, and such like," are mentioned; and these are again forbidden, 1 Pet. iv. 3. Now, Mr. Lovegood told us they meant masked dances and songs, much after

the fashion of our plays. And then you know, he told us that all horse-racings, bull-baitings, useless fairs and wakes, cock-fightings and dancings, were all of them revels. And again, he observed, that midnight revels were the worst sort of revels, because it gave a more convenient opportunity to the sons of darkness to practise their works of darkness. And we all know what sort of *innocent* amusements people are sure to have among themselves at these times, cursing, swearing, fighting, whoring, drunkenness, and every other abominable evil. Fine sort of sights these for ministers to attend. Gentlemen, have you had supper enough?

Ministers. No more, we thank you, Sir. But we must be moving.

Far. Why, you would not be running away because the Bible is fetched, that would be strange indeed for ministers. You have been near three hours at the play: We should, at least, spend one hour over the Bible.—Patty, take away every thing but the Bible. Now gentlemen, can you shew us any places in scripture that countenance your sort of proceedings?

Brisk. Why, did I not mention that the scripture says, there is a time to dance? And did not David dance before the ark?

Far. Yes; and he danced with holy joy before the Lord, praising and blessing his name all the time; quite in a rapture of thanksgiving for his great mercies to Israel. Surely you won't compare your sort of dancings to that of David, where God is quite forgotten, and thrust out of the question, and all of you may make merry in sin.

Smir. But then, Sir, we are forbidden to be "righteous over-much."

Miss Polly. There, father, I am sure that is as much to the point as any of your texts.

Far. Aye, and many a drunken, worldly-minded farmer and grazier has told me of that text before now. As though the Lord was afraid that we, poor sinful creatures might be too righteous and holy ;—lest we should repent too much ; pray too much ; or love God too much. Now, though I am but a country farmer, yet I can give you a *properer* meaning to it than that, if ever you chuse to make a sermon on it. For it means, don't be too rigorous and over severe in your judgment and dealings with your fellow creatures ; but let mercy and forbearance be mixed with judgment. I think this sounds more consistent, than to suppose, that a most righteous God should forbid us to be over righteous. And would not such notions make the Bible appear to be all contradiction and nonsense ? while we are commanded in that blessed book, to be “ holy in all manner of conversation ; ” to “ perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord ; ” and to “ be perfect, even as our father who is in heaven is perfect. ”

Smir. I suppose, Mr. Littleworth, you are frequently going down to Mr. Lovegood's for fresh lectures in divinity, for you can quite out do us.

Far. O yes, Sir, I am with him as often as my business will permit ; and when I heard him the Sunday before last preach his excellent sermon against this ribaldry, that you, gentlemen, have been supporting, I remember he told us, how much such *far-ricial* nonsenses were against the spirit and temper of real christianity. [To his Daughter.] Nancy, my child, you know we marked down his proof texts on that head also, as soon as we came home. Let us see which they were.

Nancy. Why, the first text was this. “ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service ;

and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God." And he asked, where could be the christianity of those who were entirely conformed to the world, and who ran after all its vanities; and were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

Far. And then, you know, he brought out these texts, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence," &c. "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" for "the friendship of the world is enmity with God." Now, pray young gentlemen, to be plain with you, though you are so much more *larn-elder* than I am, is it possible for any one to be more in friendship with the world than you are? And is it possible, that they who attend where you have been to-night, can be among the pure in heart who unfeignedly say, "lead us not into temptation?" and who "watch and pray lest they should enter into temptation," when they seem to tempt the very devil to tempt them?

Mrs. Lit. I am sadly afraid gentlemen my husband bears a little too hard upon you. Let me give you another glass of wine.

Smir. Thank you, madam, but we are in no great fear of an answer, after Mr. Littleworth has brought out all his texts.

Miss Polly. I am afraid that will be a long time first; for nothing now goes down with my father but the Bible. For morning, noon, and night, he is always at it; breakfast, dinner, and supper, he must have his Bible. He seems Bible mad.

Far. You see, gentlemen, my daughter has brought home no great deal of mannerly or christian-like be-

haviour to her father, by going with you to the play to-night. We will, however, bring a few more texts to confirm our point; for, pray, when you was with all the giggling thoughtless set that were at the play, were you with those who were "heavenly minded," and spiritually minded; who "were led by the Spirit;" who had "the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which was given them," who were "giving all diligence before God to make their calling and election sure, lest a promise being left to enter into his rest, any of them should seem to come short;" who were "striving to enter in at the strait gate;" who were "working out their salvation with fear and trembling;" who were "crucified to the world, who were even dead to it," "whose lives were hid with Christ in God;" and who have "Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith?" Were you among those who are panting after God; who are "hungering and thirsting after righteousness;" who are "pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ;" who are "redeeming the time, because the days are evil;" who are "thru' the Spirit, mortifying the deeds of the body;" who are "blameless and harmless, the sons of God;" who "let their light shine before men, that they may see their good works and glorify their Father, which is in heaven?" Were you among those who, "in what soever they do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him; and who likewise, "whether they eat, or whether they drink, or whatsoever they do, do all to the glory of God?" If so, you have all been at the play to the glory of God. Now, gentlemen, this is not the hundredth part of the Bible against such loose amusements; and the Lord make you sensible *what* you should be, and then you will know *where* you should be, and *what* you should do.

Smir. Well, Sir, if you admire nothing else in us, at least, you should admire our patience to hear you say so much; and after all, nothing to the purpose; for all these texts were only designed for primitive times. For, where will you find christians in this day of such a stamp, excepting a few narrowminded people of Mr. Lovegood's cast.

Far. And so truly the Bible is to be no more to us now-a-days than an old Almanack.—Mr. Brisk, can't you help Mr. Smirking out, by some proper texts of scripture to prove his point. Here's the Bible for you, Sir.

Brisk. It cannot be expected that my recollection should be sufficiently clear, having but just come from the play.

Far. No wonder that going to the play should have *thicken'd* your senses in regard to the Bible; but to my mind, it should seem very odd, that time should alter the mind of God, and that what was necessary, in a way of holiness, a thousand years ago, is not necessary now: and if we go on, as we have done of late, in about five hundred years longer, even by the approbation of God himself, men may be devils outright. Why, gentlemen, where have you been for such doctrine as this? According to this rate, the Bible is nothing better than an old lease that is now run out, and whose covenants and agreements can bind no longer; and if this be the case, how are we to come at the truth? And who is to draw us out a new rule for the present times? I am afraid, if done according to the fashion of the times, it will be a *desperate* wide one. Well, gentlemen, till you can shew me a reason to the contrary, I shall always suppose that good old Book is the standard for my faith and practice; and as God cannot alter in himself, so he cannot alter in that holy word of his,

which he has given us to make us wise unto salvation.

Smir. Though I like your arguments very well Mr. Brisk, of taking these troublesome texts and putting them up, out of the way of these modern enthusiasts, by confining them to primitive times; yet, I think, the same business is better accomplished among *rational* Dissenters, by calling them strong *eastern* expressions, and representing them as abstruse metaphors; that being born again, or being new creatures, only means being brought from the old Jewish religion into the christian, which was then a new one. And being led by the Spirit, only means, *led by a good disposition*. And as for all these other strong expressions that Mr. Littleworth seems so fond of, they now only mean, that we, christians, should not be remiss in the sober practice of virtue and morality.

Far. Now, gentlemen, if you wish me to believe all this, you must furnish me with a new set of brains: for it was but about three weeks ago that Mr. Dolittle was here, and then I was to believe, that all our good old church books were to be understood according to a double meaning, for and against, or contrary to their meaning. And now all that the Bible *means*, is *to mean nothing*. Do any of us think that we are at liberty, after the same fashion, to explain away a book of man's making as we explain away the book of God? And now, gentlemen, you must give me leave to speak to you the thoughts of my heart in a homely manner. You have been encouraging a set of these loose fellows, whose lives, you know, are generally wicked, and who are so profane in their conversation that you would be ashamed to make them your companions, or take them into your houses; and these are the men you hire to play the fool to please you, and spread corruption where-

ever they go. Would either of you, gentlemen, have thought it proper to have gone upon the stage, and acted for them, had any of them been sick, and there feigned the character of a filthy whoremonger, or a swearing sailor? Or would it have become you, Mr. Brisk, (for you have a good voice) to have sung one of their nasty foolish songs?

Brisk. I confess, Sir, I should not have thought that proper, any more than yourself.

Far. But, I think, it would have been quite as proper for you to have done it yourself, as to hire these strolling buffoons to do it for you. Whether would have been the greater sin in me, to have hired Thomas Newman to go and steal a sheep for me off Mapleton common, or to have stolen it myself?

Smirking. I confess, Sir, I wish we had not gone to the play to-night, because you are so offended.

Far. Your having offended such a poor ordinary creature as I am, is of very little consequence indeed. But should you not both be much concerned that you have offended God. Could but you ministers know, (whether you call yourselves Churchmen or Dissenters, is of no consequence,) how people are hardened in sin by your lives; how many laugh at all religion, because they see so little in those who profess it; while they make the duties of religion their burden, and seem never happy but when they are acting like others who know not God. And what must many of your hearers think and feel, when they see the same man in the pulpit, and perhaps with them at the Sacrament on the Sunday, who was their companion at the playhouse, or any other foolish amusement, on the week day. If he attempt to hold up the truths of the Bible, he holds them up against himself; he is therefore under the necessity of covering all these awful declarations that are so plainly revealed against these ways; and preaching

up in its stead a bit of a sermon made up of heathenish morality ; in short, as their lives do not come up to the Bible, they are determined to bring down the Bible to their lives. *That* this night, gentlemen, you have been attempting to do, and if by our conversation you are not convinced that you are wrong; I am, through the grace of God, more than ever convinced that I am right. God has lately wrought a wonderful change in my heart! And I am sure the Bible does not give us unmeaning metaphors, but tells us of divine realities. Through infinite mercy, poor wicked sinner as I have been till very lately, yet now I know what it is to be "a new creature in Christ Jesus." This has made the Bible to me a delightful book; and now I trust I can say, "Lord, how I love thy law, all the day long is my study therein." Nancy, since then, I trust, is born of God. I pray for my wife, and other children daily: I think they must see I am an altered man, though I seem to be called at the eleventh hour; for time with me must soon be at an end. I confess, I have been kept back much from these things by the careless and neglectful lives of gentlemen of your profession. O that you were but better men, for the sake of those precious souls who depend upon the instruction they receive from you! But I speak it plainly, neither of you can be fit to be the instructors of others till better instructed yourselves. I never could keep my son Harry in any order, after he had been led to those places where you have been taking my daughters this night.— Though he was wild enough before, yet it was there that he met with his complete *ruination*, in this world; and I now begin to fear, I never shall see him any more. And how shall I meet him in the world to come? I am ashamed of the bad example I have set before him. [The Farmer weeps, and

adds.] But blessed be God that I ever met with that dear man of God Mr. Lovegood; by him I have been directed to see the evil of sin, and to seek for salvation in Jesus Christ, and that salvation, I bless his name, I now find, and feel in myself.

Supper being ended, the Farmer asks one of the ministers to return thanks: they are confused and silent. The Farmer stands up and prays thus:

THE FARMER'S PRAYER.

“ Holy and merciful Saviour, we bless thee for feeding our vile bodies; but what are our bodies to our souls! O feed and save them for thy mercy's sake! My dear wife and children are here before thee; I lift up my eyes and heart to thee for their salvation: turn them, O Lord, and so shall they be turned. Surely thou hast already saved the vilest sinner in the family, in all the world, in saving me. Is there not love in thy bleeding heart for them also, O my God and Saviour! And if my poor son, that prodigal son as he has been, is still alive, save him. O save him for thy mercy's sake! Hear the prayers of a broken-hearted parent for his ruined child. Thou blessed Shepherd of souls, seek after that poor wandering sheep who is gone so far from thee, so far from thy fold, and from his father's house, and bring him near thyself. Have mercy on these young men, who call themselves thy ministers: make them what they should be, by saving them from the love of the world, and all their vain ways; that they may be thy ministers in deed and in truth. Pardon them, dear Lord, in that my children have been led into such paths of vanity by them; and lead them by thy Holy Spirit, that for the time to come they may be the faithful leaders of ruined souls to the knowledge of thy great salvation. Grant this, O Lord,

for the sake of Christ our most compassionate Saviour and only Redeemer. Amen and Amen."

The ministers, surprised with such an unexpected treat from the Bible, and such a prayer, looked at each other under considerable agitation, and, after the usual salutations, retired.

DIALOGUE VI.

THE PRODIGAL'S CONVERSION AT SEA.

MR. LOVEGOOD, FARMER LITTLEWORTH, SQUIRE WORTHY,
AND OTHERS.

Mr. Littleworth comes from Grace-hill farm, near Mapleton, and sits down in the kitchen deeply affected. Mr. Lovegood soon afterwards comes in from visiting his parishioners.

Mr. Lovegood. WHY, Mr. Littleworth, I am sorry to see you so much affected—is all well at home?

Far. Oh, Sir, I cannot stand it; it quite overcomes me.

Loveg. What overcomes you, Sir? We should not be “cast down with overmuch sorrow;” upon every event we should learn to say, “Thy will be done.”

Far. Oh, Sir! My son! my son!

Loveg. What, then, is poor Henry dead?

Far. Dead, Sir! No; blessed be God: “this my son was dead, and is alive again;” he that was lost, and, as I thought, for ever lost, is found again, and I trust, found in Christ. Oh, Sir, it so overcomes me, that I think I never shall be able to outlive it! But, blessed be God, come what will of it, I can now say, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!” The Lord has not only saved me, a vile old sinner, and my daughter Nance, but now, I trust, my dear Harry is a saved soul. See, Sir, what a sweet letter he has sent to me. [The farmer gives

the letter to Mr. Lovegood.] Here, Sir, take and read it, if you please, for I cannot read it again, it so affects me. I was above an hour before I could read it through: I cannot stand it again: besides, you can read better than I. [Mr. Lovegood takes the letter, and reads it.]

"Island of Antigua.

"Dear and honoured Father,

"IT is now full four years since, in a most wicked, disobedient, and rebellious state of mind, I left your house, and entered as a captain's clerk on board the *Rambler*. I confess you might have heard from me before, but I was ashamed to write. Whenever I thought of it, guilt flew in my face, while I considered how kindly you treated me as your only son! how you gave me the best education in your power! and which, I am sure you did out of pure love, and to the best of your judgment; though I confess it laid the foundation of that conduct before you and my God, which must have been my eternal ruin, had not such undeserved mercies prevented, as must for ever fill my heart with praise and glory to my most merciful God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In that school, my dearest father, I met with those who first secretly led me into sin. Even when a school-boy, none but God knows the wicked devices of my heart. And as "evil men and seducers are sure to wax worse and worse," so it was with me. I look upon my abominable and cruel conduct to you, and my dear mother, with perpetual abhorrence and grief. I pray you both a thousand and a thousand times to forgive me, as I now trust that, vile as I have been, I myself am forgiven of God. I shall for ever bless the most merciful name of God my Saviour and Redeemer, if I find you both alive, should I return to my native shore; for again and

again have I done enough to bring your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

“ I have oftentimes thought, that by my ungrateful silence you must, at least in your imagination, have numbered me with the dead : for indeed I have been, in deaths often. But a most gracious God would not suffer me yet to die, because it was his merciful design to change my heart, and constrain me to live the rest of my life, I trust, to the glory of his name. Yes, my most kind father, it was all designed by a gracious providence, that your poor prodigal son should be for a while given over to the devices of his wicked heart, so as that he should be sent far from home to be brought near to God. I fear the word of life, which has since then been made known to me, is but little known in the neighbourhood in which I received my birth and education. O, my dear parents, I want now only to live, that I may impart unto you how I have been converted from my vile ways, and have been constrained to live to God; and you may rely upon it, while I am enabled to depend on him, that I shall never grieve your dear hearts any more. Christ’s love to me has made me love him; and now I love you most dearly for his name’s sake.

“ Your once rebellious, but now affectionate son most humbly requests, that neither you nor my dear mother, would blame yourselves that I had not from you a better example before I went to sea. Few in our parts knew or did better, nor yet so well; for I fear the knowledge and love of God was then sadly wanting among us all. Some time before I went to sea, I heard of a Mr. Lovegood who was presented to the living of Lower Brookfield, and was much ridiculed for his religious zeal; and I remember we all, especially my sisters, used to join in the general laugh against him. Now as this is the common

lot of all good men, I hope you will find him a faithful and upright minister of the gospel. My dear father, do for your own soul's sake, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, go and hear him. [Here Mr. Lovegood is so much affected that he joins with the Farmer, and weeps abundantly. After several attempts he continues the letter.] Perhaps he may administer to your soul those precious words of the gospel of Christ, which have proved the power of God to my salvation; though once, as you well know, to the grief of your heart, the vilest, the most abandoned wretch that ever lived on the earth. I should be glad, if I had time, to tell you all the most merciful steps in judgment, providence, and grace, that have brought my vile heart to repent and return to God; but the packet is likely to sail every hour, which will take this to England; and it is supposed, in about a fortnight afterwards our little fleet will sail for Portsmouth: so that within a month or five weeks after you receive this, you may expect to see your most undutiful and ungrateful child upon his knees before you, begging pardon for all his base behaviour to you and my dear mother. And though I shall bring home but a very scanty share of prize money; yet, if I can but bring to my dear parents the inestimable prize of the knowledge of Christ, that pearl of great price! how joyful shall I be! As to the small sum that may fall to my lot, the moment I see you I shall tell you it must be yours: for, as I have confessed the sin with much grief before the Lord, I now confess it before you; that when I used to go to markets and fairs, unknown to you I too often kept back a part of the price of the things I sold; and in a few other instances the money for which I sold your goods, I entirely kept to myself. I am very happy that it is now a little in my power to make restitution; while

I hope I shall in a measure earn my daily bread by applying myself diligently to the business of your farm as soon as I shall have my discharge, which is promised me on account of the wound I received in my hip, by a splinter from the ship, in an engagement with the enemy; whereby I had nearly been sent to stand before the tribunal of my God, in a state most deplorably wicked: and though I may go halting to the grave thereby, yet I bless God for his most merciful correction; for if I had not been most severely wounded, and afterwards brought to the very gates of death by a fever that attended, I might have continued the same thoughtless and wicked wretch. O blessed, for ever blessed be God for that judgment, sent in so much mercy, whereby I was made willing to attend to the very affectionate advice and prayers of some few, who are Christians indeed in this floating hell! Though before I could, with others, ridicule them, yet in the time of my danger, when I felt the terrors of the Lord upon my soul, I was made willing to attend to that voice of tender mercy, they administered to my desponding heart. Since I have been on this island, God has wonderfully preserved my health amidst an abundance of sickness. As soon as I landed, I sought after those who knew the converting grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and found it among the people called Moravians. I cannot express with what tenderness and love they carried it towards me; and it is wonderful, whenever they saw me down-cast, under a sense of the evils of my past life, how they recommended me to the dying love of the Lord Jesus Christ, that my poor sinful heart might be comforted in him.

“ Present my affectionate love to my sisters; and as we have often joined together in sin, so may we live to pray together! I grieve, my dear father,

to think how ignorant and vain we all were before I went to sea; and I write with many tears, while, with much shame and grief, I acknowledge what a vile sinner I once was; but now I can bless his dear name, who has so mercifully softened and changed my polluted nature, as that I can from the bottom of my heart, subscribe myself,

Your most dutiful
and affectionate son,
HENRY LITTLEWORTH."

[Mr. Lovegood having read the letter, returns it to Mr. Littleworth.]

Loveg. My dear friend, I enter into all the joys you feel, and can sympathise with you, knowing how much you need divine support, though the event be so blessed and glorious.

Far. Oh, Sir! what mercies God is pouring down upon the family of such a poor old sinner as I have been! O that my wife and daughters might live before him!

Loveg. Well, Sir, hope and trust; for nothing is too hard for the Lord. But don't you admire what the grace of God truly is, in that broken and humble spirit the Lord has given to your son? and how true it is, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature? that old things are passed away, and that all things are become new?"

Far. Ah, dear Sir, and don't you think I have felt something of the same change upon my poor old sinful heart; and for sure it is a most glorious change!

Loveg. Yes, Mr. Littleworth, it is truly glorious: As in your son, so on the hearts of all wherein the converting grace of God is felt. Sin, however strongly rooted in our corrupted natures, must give way to the omnipotent agency of God's Holy

Spirit; and how wonderfully does this appear to be exemplified in the heart and conduct of poor Henry! He has not language to describe how vile he has been; and you perceive also what tenderness and love he now feels to all, and what affectionate obedience he is willing to shew; how does this prove the truth of that blessed word, "that love is the fulfilling of the law;" and it affords full evidence also, that if we love Christ we shall love to obey him.

Far. And, oh! what a wicked *blade* he was before he went to sea. After he had got linked in with Tom Wild, Will Frolick, and that set, there was no keeping him at home; and when he found I did not chuse that they should keep up their *rackets* at my house, he would watch every opportunity to be away; and then I should hear of him driving about to every horse-race and fair within twenty miles round. One time I should hear that he had been fighting, then he had been gambling; twice was he before the justice for his drunken frolics, and night after night have my dame and I sat up for him, while sometimes he would be out all the night, and at other times he would come home at twelve or one o'clock, sulky, ill-natured, and half drunk; and all this was my own doings; for I was wicked and foolish enough to send him to that school where there was nothing of the fear of God; and afterwards I took him to all sorts of *romancing nonsense*, such as plays and puppet-shews, by way of diverting him, and that led him into company which brought on his ruin.

Loveg. Yes, Sir, but now a very different scene is before you; your son, I humbly trust, is "born from above;" and such are made "blameless and harmless the sons of God." "As an obedient child, he will not fashion himself according to the former

lusts in his ignorance ;” but “ as he who hath called him is holy, so will he be holy in all manner of conversation.” His hands will no longer be lifted up to strike the mad and angry blow of inward murder and revenge ; but with diligence and industry will he learn to labour as Providence shall direct him.— His tongue will be no more employed in the language of folly, blasphemy, and filthy conversation ; but now, his heart being blessed with the grace of God, “ his conversation will be as becometh the Gospel of Christ,” and such as will be “ to the use of edifying, that it may administer grace to the hearers :” and instead of finding him a sulky, ill-natured sot, you will find him “ sober, temperate in all things,” “ loving, gentle, easy to be intreated.”— The lion is already turned into the lamb, and the disposition of the tiger and the bear shall prevail no more ; and as to his feet, they will need no fetters to keep them out of those vile paths, in which he once ran with such eager haste. No, dear Sir, they will rejoice to walk with you to the house of God, to hear the glad tidings of salvation ; no other house like that will his feet now so delight to tread.

Far. Dear Sir, it quite melts me down ! Oh ! what joy of heart shall I feel the first time he and I shall walk together to your church, to hear the man we once so wickedly ridiculed in the days of our ignorance, preaching unto us the love of that Saviour, who has “ called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.” And poor Nancy, oh ! what a blessing to her, in having such a brother brought home to the family ! for it is wonderful, how soft and good, and gentle, and humble, that dear girl is become, since she has received the gospel of Christ. And when I consider the grace I have lately felt in my own heart, and how sweetly you deliver these

things to us from the pulpit, I wonder that every one who comes to hear you is not converted to God, as well as ourselves.

Loveg. So it appears to all who have been newly converted by the word of life themselves; but when we consider the hardness and the deceitfulness of the human heart, we shall rather wonder that any of us are renewed.

Far. Don't you think, Sir, by my son Harry's letter, that he is really renewed?

Loveg. Indeed, Sir, it breathes a most excellent spirit, and I trust he will give you abundantly more joy than ever he has given you grief; but still we must tell him, if we live to see him, that he has but just put on the armour for the battle, and that he must watch unto prayer.

Far. The Lord keep both him and me watching and praying; but, oh, how it affects me to think what we all must feel when he first comes home, and finds his poor old wicked father has been blessed with a new heart! Oh, what a meeting it will be! but how ashamed shall I be of myself on account of the bad example I have set before him: how often have he and I neglected our church and sabbath, that we might go on some idle visit, or after some foolish pastime. I can't think that he would ever have been so bad in his wicked ways, if I had not first led him into them. Well, I'll confess it to him with shame, and tell him the fault was mostly mine.

Loveg. It might be better if both of you were not to dwell too much on these things; they were done in the "times of ignorance that God winked at." You are both, I trust, now arrived in the new world of grace, and your business will be with him to press forward to the eternal world of glory.

Far. But O, Sir, when my dear child offers me his

prize money, because in the days of his wickedness he robbed me, how can he think I could ever take it from him?

Loveg. He does not know the blessed change that has taken place upon your mind, and he hopes much, by his honesty and integrity, to win your soul to Christ; and as he now, doubtless, attends to his Bible, he probably thinks on what Paul promised Philemon on behalf of Onesimus the servant who robbed his master; and his conscience will surely tell him, that it was worse to rob a father than a master.

Far. But he says he trusts God has forgiven him, and shall not I forgive him? Dear child! I would not grieve him for a thousand worlds! No, no; I shall want none of his prize-money, while I have in him such a prize as my unbelieving heart never expected. It will cut me to the heart when he makes the offer.

Loveg. Well, Sir, we must contrive to soften matters before you and your son have the first interview.

Far. I wish you would, Sir, for the thoughts of it are quite too much for me: he talks of begging pardon on his knees, when I should rather go on my knees to him, for leading my own son astray by sending him to such a school, and by the bad example I set before him. If he acts as he says he will, I am sure I never shall be able to bear it. [The Farmer again weeps excessively; after he is in a measure recovered, Mr. Lovegood thus addresses him.]

Loveg. My friend, though I feel for you very tenderly, yet your very tears put me in mind of the joys of "the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;" but I think we can contrive matters so as that your minds may be properly prepared for the meeting.

Far. Why it is most likely I can't write to him before I see him, as he will come from Portsmouth directly as he lands.

Loveg. Yes, but he will certainly travel in the stage that goes through Mapleton to the north, and then you may tell Mr. Vintner, of the George, to direct your son to Mr. Traffick's of the shop, who is a very sedate worthy man; then you may put a letter into his hands that he may give it to your son, and you may tell him what you think proper, and afterwards Mr. Traffick may bring him to his house, and give him further particulars; and Billy Traffick, who is a very serious young man, will walk with him to your house.

Far. No, dear child, he is lame; I must send Thomas Newman to bring him, with a horse for him to ride on, and another horse that he may bring his things with him: but for all that Billy Traffick may come with him, for he is a choice lad; and I must do all I can to put my son into good company: for, oh, what mischief was done to my precious boy by the bad company he kept before he went to sea!

Loveg. I think, Sir, yours is the best plan; and what a feast will this be to poor honest Thomas to bring such a rich treasure home to his master's house! and Thomas, though a plain, yet he is a very sensible man, and will know how to break matters to him.

Far. And what a feast will this be to me to receive such a treasure in such a son, returned to me again in peace and safety, and with the rich treasure of the grace of God in his heart. O the yearnings of a father's bowels over such a child!

[A message from Mr. Lovegood's servant.]

Servant. Sir, 'Squire Worthy and his lady, with

two of the young misses, are just come into the hall.

Mr. Loveg. to Mrs. Loveg. My dear, will you go with them into the parlour? [To the Farmer.] Mr. Littleworth, you must go in with me.

Far. I am afraid if I do it will quite overcome me as bad as ever. But if you think it best I'll try, and perhaps the 'Squire may give us some advice on this occasion.

Mr. Worthy. [After the usual salutations.] Why, Mr. Littleworth, I did not expect to see you here. I came to enquire of our worthy minister if he had heard any tidings of your son, as I see by the newspapers a packet arrived at Falmouth on Wednesday last from the fleet in which he sailed.

Loveg. Mr. Littleworth has a letter from him, and a blessed one it is! Would you let Mr. Worthy see it, Mr. Littleworth?

[Mr. Littleworth again in tears.]

Far. Yes; but I cannot read it, it so affects me. [To Mr. Worthy.] If I had all your honour's estate, it would not have given me half the joy I have felt in receiving that letter.

[Mr. Littleworth lends it to Mr. Worthy.]

Mr. Worthy. Sir, as you say it is so good a letter, if it contains no family secrets, may I read it out, that my eldest daughter, who has a serious turn of mind, may gain some instruction by it?

Far. O yes, Sir, you may read it out, but then I cannot stop to hear it again.

Loveg. I think, Mr. Littleworth, you had better not stop, but take a walk in the garden while Mr. Worthy and I read over your son's letter, and converse about it.

Far. Why yes, Sir; if the 'Squire will pardon me, I would rather do so, for I cannot stand it again.

[The letter is again read over, and the farmer is a second time introduced.]

Mr. Worthy. Well, Mr. Littleworth, I must not say too much to you in a way of congratulation, as you cannot bear it; but we have been planning, that on the evening your son comes home, Mr. Lovegood had better give you the meeting, and spend the first evening with you.

Far. [To Mr. Worthy.] To be sure it would be *desperate unmannerly* to ask such a gentleman as you are to come and meet us; but in our old house I have a hall that would hold twenty such guests, and a heart big enough to hold a thousand more.

Mr. Worthy. Thank you, my kind friend; but as Mr. Lovegood will be of the party, you will have quite company enough on that occasion.

Mrs. Worthy. But Mr. Littleworth, next Wednesday three weeks, Mr. Lovegood is to examine the Sunday school children, and preach a sermon to them and their parents at the church, and afterwards Mr. Worthy is to give them all a supper in the servants' hall. Perhaps your son may be returned by that time, and then we shall be happy to see you and all your family to tea, that you may go and hear the sermon.

Far. Ah, madam, if you and the 'Squire will but put up with our *countrified fashions*; to be sure we should be mighty proud to make such a visit; and perhaps my daughters Polly and Patty may hear a sermon that the Lord may bless to their hearts, for they are *desperate* fond of being with fine *gentlefolk*.

[Mr. Worthy's servant enters the parlour.]

Servant. Sir, Thomas Newman has brought Mr. Littleworth's horse.

Far. Tell him I shall be with him presently. I thought as I walked here it would be too much to

walk home against the hill, so I thought as soon as the horses had done plough, Thomas should bring one of them. My knees and ancles are *deadly* weak ; what have I suffered by the gout ! but there, the Lord forgive me, it is in a measure through my own wickedness, for I have made a God of my belly.

Loveg. Tell Thomas to put the horse in my stable, and come in and refresh himself.

Far. O no, Sir, I thank you, I'll be getting home. My wife is mighty fond of Thomas, though she does not like his religion ; and he has always victuals enough when he comes to our house ; and it was Thomas's good life, that made me think so well of your good sermons.

Far. to Mr. Worthy. I wish your honour a good day ; the same to you, madam.

Worthy. Farewell, Mr. Littleworth.

[Mr. Lovegood goes with the farmer to see him mounted.]

Loveg. Well, Thomas, how do you do ? how is betty and all the children ?

Tho. They are all very well, Sir, thank the Lord, except little Joseph, and he has been *sore* bad with the whooping cough ; but madam Worthy sent him some *doctor's stuff* that has done him an abundance of good.

Loveg. Let me see, Thomas ; Joseph is one of the twins.

Tho. Ah, sweet child ; and I felt him as dear to me as an Isaac, and I should have needed an Abraham's faith to have parted with him.

Loveg. But have you heard that master Harry is coming back again from sea ?

Tho. Why, Sir, I heard that just before I came down, and that my master has been *most desperately* affected at the news. Lord grant that he may be

brought home so as that he may be brought to God. Who can tell, master?

Far. Oh, Thomas, that is done already; praise the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name!

Tho. What, has master Harry felt the converting grace of God!

Far. Oh, Thomas, [Farmer weeps and wipes his eyes,] but I'll tell you as I ride along, and you shall walk by me.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Littleworth, the Lord bless and support you!

Far. And you too, Sir, a thousand times, for the good you have done to my immortal soul. [They go home. The Farmer continues speaking to Thomas.]

Oh, Thomas, you will be all amazement to hear how broken and humble and contrite my son writes about his wicked courses.

Tho. Master, that is a blessed sign; for when once we are made to hate sin, we may be sure there is a divine change. The Lord be praised if master Harry has been saved from his wicked state; for how wild and wicked for sure he was! but, master, if you and I do but think what we once were, and what through the grace of God we now are, we need despair of none. Can't you remember what Mr. Lovegood said about three Sundays ago, when he was preaching about Christ being able to save to the uttermost: "Who but a God can tell how far God's uttermost can go?"

Far. Why he has no notion how the Lord has converted the heart of such a poor old sinner as I have been. How he will be surprised when he comes home! it quite overcomes me to think of it.

Tho. Had we not better contrive to tell him this before hand?

Far. That we have contrived already, and you are to go and meet him at Mapleton, and Mr. Lovegood is to come and sup with us. O what a blessed meeting it will be!

Tho. And how much more blessed still will be the meeting in heaven! But, master, if I may be so bold, how came it all about?

Far. Here, Thomas [lending him the letter,] you shall take this letter home with you, and you and Betty shall read it together; but be sure and take care of it, for I value it more than untold gold. O how I shall count the days till my son comes home! And after supper Mr. Lovegood will give us family prayer, and after that I am determined in my poor fashion to keep it up; for then we shall be quite strong when dear Harry comes home; and who knows but it may be a blessing to my wife and two daughters.

Tho. Why every body knows what a Christian-like family our 'squire's is; and I do think it is all on account of the wonderful good order that is kept up in family prayer.

Far. Aye, aye, Thomas; and by the blessing of God we'll have family prayer too; and Mr. Lovegood says he will make a hymn on purpose upon the prodigal's return, and a *brave* hymn I'll warrant it will be. Thomas, you must be there to pitch the tune; and Mr. Lovegood says you shall be clerk at church next, if any thing happens to old Andrew Snuffle.

Tho. Ah dear, how shall I feel if ever our minister should make such a poor simple creature clerk of our parish; to be sure it would be a wonderful help to me and my poor dear Betty, to bring up our children; but I am sadly afraid Mr. Lovegood will not be long minister of our parish.

Far. The Lord forbid ! but why should you think so, Thomas ?

Tho. Why I am told our 'squire is to go next winter to London to put one of his sons to some place of *larning*. I hope he wont stop long, for all the poor people in our village are in a sad taking when he is away ; but I am afraid if he was to tell Lord *Cancellor* what a wonderful man our minister is, the king (God bless him) will soon make him lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

[Thus the Farmer and Thomas went on chatting till his arrival at home. The sequel of some further events will soon be presented to the reader.]

DIALOGUE VII.

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 'SQUIRE WORTHY, MR. LOVEGOOD, MR. LITTLEWORTH,
 AND OTHERS.

Proving the utility of Sunday Schools.

SAMUEL WORTHY, Esq. possesses an ample fortune in the north. His father, who was knighted when he took up the county address on the birth of his present majesty, he being then the sheriff, was one of those good old-fashioned gentlemen, who used to live at home among their tenants and neighbours; giving a true sample of the simplicity and generosity known in this kingdom about sixty years ago, when no country gentleman went to London but once in four or five years. His mode of travelling was in a coach and four, the butler and groom riding upon two other coach horses, commonly called helpers. They travelled five miles an hour, and about twenty-five miles a day, and in general were obliged to pass a Sunday upon the road. From the inn he and his family always went twice to church; and he had no more thought of breaking in on the solemnities of the sabbath; than he had of robbing on the highway. You had always the idea of a funeral procession, passing through the village on the commencement of this journey; but on his return, every bell in the steeple echoed and re-echoed the joy of the inhabitants; when every grown person stood at the door with a bow or a curtsy, and every child ran out into the

street, with a bow down to the ground, close by the coach door, to testify their general joy on his happy return.

While in London, the family used to take lodgings at three pounds a week, in some convenient large house in or near Bond Street, for the sake of country air : even Brook Street, connected with it, was not then in existence, and assumed its name from an aunt of the writer of these dialogues, who was also herself no distant relation to the family of the Worthies. This family, though once very numerous, being found almost in every country, and some of them even of noble blood, yet from a very fatal disease which has of late years prevailed among them, it is feared they will soon become extinct. This unhappy mortality in the family has taken place since their descendants have been accustomed to attend so many bathing and water-drinking places in the summer, and especially since they have taken up their winter's residence in our great metropolis ; and may be imputed, partly to the poisonous vapours of the former, and the noxious stagnated air of the latter. The venerable knight (a title in those days honourable) kept a very regular house. Though he was rather *formal* than *spiritual* in his religion, yet family prayer was regularly attended to ; nor could any thing but sickness detain the family from church and sacrament on all occasions ; but, unfortunately for that gentleman, Mr. Deadman was then vicar of the parish.

His son, Mr. S. Worthy, not less respectable than his father, succeeded to the estate about sixteen years ago. After which Mr. Deadman died of a lethargy, and Mr. Lovegood was presented to the living. Mr. and Mrs. Worthy were at first considerably astonished at what was called *his new doctrine*, and felt some degree of irritation, though intermixed

with candour. When they first heard, they considered that as all the formality and decency belonging to the character of their most respectable predecessor was adopted by them, they were righteous enough already ; but, by the wise and good conduct of Mr. Lovegood, their prejudices were soon abated ; and after he had delivered a most striking sermon from that text, " Thou hast a name to live and art dead," they were determined to examine the Bible for themselves ; and happily for them, (they being bred very strict church people) they found the Bible so well comported with the doctrines of the Common Prayer Book, that they soon discovered old Mr. Deadman, and his cousin-german Mr. Blindman, had preached no more the true doctrine of the Bible, as it relates to salvation by Jesus Christ, than if they had been two of the priests of Jupiter. This truly valuable gentleman, as soon as he received good, promoted it to the utmost of his power, and became a very warm advocate for Sunday Schools. The reader, therefore, shall know what passed while he made a feast for a large assembly of poor children and their parents belonging to the Sunday School of the parish in which he presided.

The reader must recollect, that in a former dialogue Mr. and Mrs. Worthy had invited Farmer Littleworth to attend the meeting, as hopes were then entertained that, by the time intended for the celebration of this kind festival, Henry might arrive from sea : but the Farmer, having heard of many storms and tempests, was strongly agitated with a variety of doubts and fears, whether he should ever be blessed with the sight of a son, now rendered so dear to him by such circumstances as have already been related. Notwithstanding, the invitation was accepted. The farmer rode down to Mr. Worthy's, though with a heavy heart, (to see his son was now

all in all to him,) and Miss Nancy rode behind her father. Miss Polly and Miss Patty chose to walk, while Sam carried some new purchased trappings from Mrs. Flirt's, which were to be put on in Mrs. Trusty's (the housekeeper's) room before they made their appearance in the parlour. Thus, while the affectation of the two misses was noticed with secret ridicule and contempt, the unaffected simplicity of Nancy and her father was observed with reverence and respect.

A little fracas, however, had just before happened between the Farmer and his wife. She was a very *prudent thrifty* woman, and loved this world better than the next: but now the Farmer's heart was opened. Once he thought of nothing but how to get, now it was in his heart to know how to give. He fixed his eyes on a large fitch of bacon, and after a little controversy with Mrs. Littleworth, who still loved getting more than giving, it was entrusted to Thomas, to be carried to the 'Squire's, there to be catered among the children, as an additional present to the parents of those who behaved well.

Mr. Lovegood first led his family of little ones to the church, where they were seated together, and surrounded by their parents and friends; then chose some lessons very appropriate, and made some affectionate and striking observations as he read them.—His sermon, as designed for children, was concise, but impressive; and knowing that little minds must have short lessons, he varied the subject by the following little histories.

First, he told them of a child of a perverse and obstinate turn of mind, who, neither with nor without correction would obey her poor mother, whose husband had cruelly gone away and left her. This child, after a mild and moderate correction, went out of the house resentful and sulky, and drowned

herself in the brook ; from whence he took an opportunity of warning children against the evil of bad tempers, and of enforcing the “ meekness and gentleness which was in Christ Jesus,” and is among all real christians.

His next story was about a very lovely boy.— Though once inclined to be very wicked, his heart afterwards became so tenderly impressed with the Saviour’s love to fallen sinners, that he would be frequently quite overpowered by the tender feelings of his own mind. He would even ask his parent’s leave to part with the shoes from off his feet, and his clothes from off his back, when he saw other poor children, as he supposed in greater want than himself : and when he had no money of his own to give, the dear child would even turn beggar to his parents and others to assist them. He never thought of telling a lie, because he dreaded the idea of doing wrong ; and only wrong things need to be covered with a lie. And whenever he saw other children do wrong, he would talk to them very gravely and seriously against their evil ways ; and even in his play, if any children behaved cruel or unkind, he would grieve, weep, and retire. But this dear child, it seems, was too full of heaven to live on earth. Before he died, he called his brothers and sisters around his bed three times over, on the three last days of his life, and told them all that he was going to his dear Saviour, who had pardoned his sins, and changed his heart ; and exhorted them most affectionately to turn to the Lord, and renounce their ~~sins~~. He even cast his dying arms around the necks of them one by one, praying them to turn to the dear Jesus, insisting, with many tears, that they should promise him they would ; and then added, “ I could die for you all a thousand times, if that could but save you from dying

in your sins. O! think of a dying Christ! and give him your hearts, that we may meet again in glory!"

After a most affectionate application to the children, Mr. Lovegood, addressed the parents, observing that, as a parent, he knew the powers of natural affection; but urged upon them an affection of a far more refined and spiritual nature—an affection for their souls. He said, that correction should never be administered, but in much tenderness and love; that every stripe given by an angry hand, from a revengeful heart, increased the evil for which the child was so unwisely and unmercifully corrected. That we should chastise our children as the Lord corrects his; never in wrath, but ever in love. In short, his address to the parents was not less wise and good, than his exhortation to the children was affectionate and kind; while every heart seemed to be melted down under the sweet influence which attended his discourse. Nor was it a less affecting scene to observe with what difficulty Mr. Lovegood, who possessed very tender feelings, got through these stories, and this address! How Thomas Newman nodded at his lovely group of little ones, to excite their more serious attention! How Betty sat with her babe at the breast, praying for a blessing on every word! How Farmer Littleworth wept like the rain, while he heard of the conversion of the child, thinking all the time on the conversion of his own son! How Mr. Merryman, lately recovered from a dissolute life through Mr. Lovegood, looked up to him as to a father, with fixed attention and a watery eye; beholding the lovely instrument in the hand of God, by whom he was reclaimed from a life miserable and dishonourable to himself, and destructive to the souls of his parishioners: and how Mr. Worthy, with an elevated smile of approbation and delight, rejoiced in the happiness and blessedness of the neighbourhood, among whom

he lived with affectionate patriarchal simplicity of conduct; praising and blessing God for influencing the mind of *Lord Cancellor* (as Thomas calls him) to send such a man into that parish—so wise, zealous, and kind as dear Mr. Lovegood! O what a blessing would England enjoy, were every parish pulpit adorned with such a minister, sanctioned by men of such affluence and character as good Esquire Worthy of Brookfield Hall. Long live the family, and may they never want such a chaplain as Mr. Lovegood, to administer among them the blessed word of everlasting life!

After the sermon Mr. Lovegood gave out the following hymn, which was sung by the children, and Thomas Newman pitched the tune.

WHAT children like us have such cause to be glad!
 What children such means of instruction have had!
 Such seasons to hear, and to sing of the Lord,
 While many know nothing of him or his word.

We hear how our Maker from heaven came down,
 And willingly left for lost sinners his throne;
 Then taking our nature, became a poor child,
 And us by his suff'rings to God reconcil'd.

O mystery of godliness, wonder of grace!
 May we without ceasing adore him and praise:
 O teach us to know what a Saviour we have,
 To trust him, and love him, and on him believe.

Next commenced the examination. Mr. Attentive, a barber from Mapleton, was the school-master, who was appointed to this office, because he had made a sacrifice of his daily bread, by not following his occupation on the Lord's-day.

Mr. Lovegood was the examiner. Mrs. Fairspeech, who was a *professor* of that religion which she never possessed, sent her son with others to the Sunday school, and he was the first who was examined.

Mr. Loveg. Well, Bobby Fairspeech, what do

you remember of the sermon I have just now been preaching.

Bob. I remember the text, sir.

Loveg. Let us hear you repeat it.

Bob. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Loveg. And what did I say to you upon that subject?

Bob. Why, that we were all miserable sinners, and should be ruined if we did not come to Christ.

Loveg. Then it is to be hoped that you, as a miserable sinner, have been taught to come to Christ. Do you know what it is to give him your heart?

Bob. Not so much as I should.

Loveg. Why then, I fear you neglect to pray to him.

Bob. Oh no, sir; for my mother would beat me sadly if I did not *say my prayers*.

Loveg. Surely, child, you must be very wicked if you need to be beaten to say your prayers; but I should hope your mother has a better way of teaching you to pray than by beating you to it. I can hardly think that your father, who is a sensible man, though he does not come to church so often as he should, would allow you to be beaten to make you pray.

Bob. Sir, my father is scarce ever at home when it is my time to go to bed, for he always spends his evenings with Mr. Sobersides the sadler.

[Mr. Lovegood, prudently forbore asking any more questions, lest he should dive into family secrets before the children: but the truth was, that though Mrs. Fairspeech could appear very soft and *saintish* before others, yet she was of a turbulent temper, self-willed, insulting, and irritating to her husband; and after she had driven him away from the family,

would consume three times as much in applying to the gin-bottle as he and Mr. Sobersides did in a pint or two of beer over a pipe of tobacco, while they read the news-paper, and conversed on the politicks of the day. As for the faithful and salutary reproofs bestowed on Mrs. Fairspeech, they were all spent in vain; she still continued the perpetual grief of Mr. Lovegood's mind, who hated nothing more than the *cant* and hypocrisy of such false-hearted professors.]

We now attend to the examination of *Jacky Proud*.

Loveg. Well, what good have you got by coming to the Sunday school, and attending the church?

Jacky. A great deal, sir.

Loveg. What then, do you think you have a good heart?

Jacky. I hope so, sir.

Loveg. How is it then that you can say after me, "we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us?" and how could you pray that God would "have mercy on you a miserable sinner?" I am afraid you are very inattentive to those excellent prayers I read among you Sunday after Sunday; and this is no great proof of the goodness of you heart.

Jacky. Why, sir, my mother and godmother both say I am a very good child.

Loveg. But should you not rather believe what God's word says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me?"

Jacky. Sir, I do my duty as well as I can.

Loveg. What do you mean by doing your duty my child?

Jacky. I always come to church, and say my prayers night and morning.

Loveg. But merely saying your prayers is not doing your duty ; for many people say their prayers, and never mind their meaning ; and instead of doing our duty we commit a very great sin in saying our prayers in a thoughtless and negligent manner.— But, in order that I may shew you that your heart is not altogether so good as you think, I must ask you a few more questions.—Are you never angry ?

Jacky. Not very often, sir.

Loveg. I did not ask you how often you are angry : the Bible says all causeless anger is murder ; for God judges the secrets of the heart, so that whenever you are angry, you commit an act of murder in your heart before him ; and how is it that a child, with such wickedness in his nature, can have a good heart ?

Jacky. I hope I shall *make myself* better by and by.

Loveg. I am sorry you should talk of making yourself better ; for when I teach children the catechism, I tell them they can do nothing without “ God’s special grace ;” but if you can do it by and by, you can as well do it now ; and I am sure you must be a bad child if you don’t wish to be better till by and by. But did you never tell a lie ?

Jacky. Why I told one the other day, when I said I was not proud of my new clothes.

Loveg. Why then, it seems you can not only tell a lie, but be guilty of the sin of pride. I am afraid, my poor child, your heart is much worse than you suppose.

Jacky. Sir, there are many children much *wickeder* than I am, for I *never* say *no* bad words.

Loveg. Do you never, in a careless manner, say, O Lord ! O God ! O Christ !

Jacky. Yes, sir ; but they are not bad words.

Loveg. No ; the words are good ; but are not you

a very bad-hearted child for "taking the Lord's name in vain," when you are told in the third commandment, the "Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain?" No wonder, while you say your prayers, you forget what they mean; for I fear that even *then* you "take the Lord's name in vain." [The child is silent. Mr. Lovegood adds,] I hope you will soon know more of the wickedness of your own heart; but I must now talk to *Timothy Simple*.

[He was the son of an industrious widow, left with four children, who by washing, weeding in the garden, and running of errands, collected by the hand of industry every penny in her power for her indigent children; now and then receiving some occasional relief from the money given at the sacrament, which was very largely attended at Mr. Lovegood's church, together with some further support, ever flowing to all known subjects of human woe, who come within the knowledge of the honourable possessors of Brookfield Hall.]

Loveg. Well, Timothy, my child, what do you think of your heart? Is it as good as Jacky Proud's?"

Tim. I am afraid I am not so good as I should be; but I hope God will make me better.

Loveg. Then you believe in what I have frequently taught you, that we can do nothing "without God's special grace?"

Tim. Oh yes, sir, for I am afraid my heart is very wicked.

Loveg. Why do you think so?

Tim. I am ashamed to tell, sir.

Loveg. Well, my good child, I am very glad to hear you say you are ashamed of your sins; for when that is the case, our most merciful Saviour will

not only pardon your sins, but by his grace will change your heart.

Tim. I hope he will, sir, for sure I am it is very hard; for when you told that story, though other children cried much, I could hardly cry at all; and yet I should be very glad if the Lord would make me as good a child as he was.

Loveg. So he will, my child, if you will call upon him in humble prayer.

Tim. Sir, I always says the prayers out of the little book you gave me, but I am very forgetful while I say them. I wish I was as good as sister Sally, and as my mother wishes me to be.

Loveg. Is it not a great blessing from the Lord that you have such a good mother and sister?

Tim. Yes, sir, I thank the Lord for it! for you often tell us, that if it were not for the grace of God we should be all very wicked.

Loveg. And should you not be very grateful and obedient to your mother, for working so hard, that you may have a little bread, and some decent clothes?

Tim. O yes, sir, and she thanks God Almighty every day for sending you into our parish; for she says she was not a good woman till you came.

Loveg. But you know, my child, there are many bad people still living in the parish since I have been your minister. How came your mother to be better, while they continue in the same bad state?

Tim. Why, Sir, you often tell us about regeneration and a new heart; and that makes my mother a good woman, because she has a new heart.

Loveg. Then you believe that all people who have new hearts will be good people.

Tim. Yes, Sir; for it is the Holy Spirit of God who gives us these new hearts, that we may, by his grace, love God and keep his commandments. And

the reason why people are so wicked is, because they have not God's Holy Spirit in their hearts.

Loveg. Can you prove this by some text of scripture?

Tim. My memory is very bad, but I remember one.

Loveg. What is that, my child?

Tim. Sir, it is the text you preached from two Sundays ago: "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his."

[The rest of Timothy's answers were in the same style; he was a simple-hearted affectionate child, and his good natural disposition was well cultivated and improved by Mr. Lovegood's diligent attention to the poor children of the parish. *Immediately after his examination, the Esquire thought proper that he should be rewarded with a Bible, which he most gratefully and thankfully received.*

Richard Heedless's child was next examined.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Attentive, how does this child come on? Tho' he comes to the Sunday school, I never see his father at church.

Attent. I am afraid, sir, his church is at the Nag's Head in Mapleton.

Loveg. Well, but if the father acts improperly, that is no reason why the child may not receive good.

Attent. Oh, Sir, I cannot get him on at any rate: for all that he receives on the Sunday he forgets on the week days, and I am afraid it is only for the sake of the feast that we see him now.

Mr. Lovegood to Ned Heedless. Why, my child, how is it that I hear all this of you? but let us see if you understand any thing. Who made you?

Ned. God Almighty.

Loveg. What did he make you for ?

Ned. To do my duty, and mind my religion.

Loveg. But do you do your duty, and mind religion as you ought ?

Ned. I do it as well as my father.

Loveg. I am afraid if you do no better, your duty is miserably done ; but tell me who redeemed you ?

Ned. Mr. Littleworth redeemed us last Monday.

Loveg. to Mr. Littleworth. What can this poor child mean, by saying you redeemed them ?

Littlew. Truly, Sir, I cannot tell, unless it is that I stopped his father's wages to redeem his clothes out of pawn ; for after he had been two days drunk at Mapleton revel, he pledged every bit of decent clothes he had to pay his alehouse debts : and when I saw him such a dirty ragged fellow, I told him he should work for me no more till he had taken his clothes from the pawn broker's.

Loveg. to Heedless. I fear, master Heedless, your son's ignorance is to be laid to the charge of your wickedness.

Heedl. Your honour, it can't be expected that I should be able to instruct my children, for I was *never* bred to *no larning*.

Loveg. Why thousands and tens of thousands who were never bred to learning have yet been blessed with grace ; and you can't suppose you need to be a bad man, because you are a poor man : nor need you be the poor man you now are, if it were not for the wickedness of your heart. Do you ever pray ?

Heedl. Why, Sir, *more's* the pity, I cannot read.

Loveg. I did not ask you if you could read, but can you pray ?

Heedl. I can say the Lord's prayer from top to bottom.

Loveg. And is this all your religion ? I fear you

are in a dreadful state. Here, Richard, is a book for you, "A compassionate Address;" and Thomas Newman, who is almost your next neighbour, can read very well, and I dare say he will be so kind as to read it to you.

Tho. Why, Richard knows I would be glad to read to him for his good, whenever I can spare time.

Loveg. Well, Thomas, we will next hear what improvement your boy has made.—[To young Thomas.]—By whom were all things created, and by whom are they upheld and preserved?

Tho. By the Almighty God.

Loveg. And who is the Almighty God?

Tho. He is a most holy Spirit.

Loveg. And how should you serve him?

Tho. "In spirit and in truth."

Loveg. And do you think you do your duty as God demands; for you know at all times he sees and hears all you say and do.

Tho. Sir, I know I often forget God, though he knows me much better than I know myself.

Loveg. What do you mean by saying God is Almighty?

Tho. I believe he is Almighty, because he can do every thing, and that he sees and knows the ways and hearts of all.

Loveg. What do you mean by saying he is holy?

Tho. Why, he is holy because he loves nothing but that which is good, like himself. All holy men and holy angels are his delight.

Loveg. But my good boy, what do you mean by holiness?

Tho. It is loving God with all our hearts, with all our minds, and souls and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves.

Loveg. What is sin then, my child?

Tho. Why, whenever we neglect to love and fear and trust in God, and pray to him, and serve him, we sin against him; and whenever we are angry, unjust, and neglectful in our duty towards our parents, our governors, and our neighbours, we do wrong, because we sin against his holy and just commands.

Loveg. But if God be so very holy, are not we all very miserable sinners before him?

Tho. Yes. The Bible says, "there is none righteous, no not one;" but I think my father and mother are very good, and so are you and 'Squire Worthy.

Loveg. Well, but you know we must all say, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

Tho. Yes, sir; and my father always says such sort of words when he prays with us.

Loveg. What do you mean by the grace of God?

Tho. Why, my father has taught me this text, "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich."

Loveg. What do you mean by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Tho. That he died for us poor sinners on the cross.

Loveg. What then, are all poor sinners to be saved, because Christ died on the cross?

Tho. O no, sir, for you tell us from the pulpit, that if we reject Christ, Christ will reject us; and that all sinners who come to Christ will have their hearts changed and purified by his Spirit; and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. You have been just now saying to us, that every child must know the way of sin to be the high road to hell: but I pray the Lord to convert me by his grace, that I may live to his glory.

Loveg. The Lord bless you, my good boy. I am very glad you have been able to attend so well to the instruction of your father, and that you get so much good by coming to the Sunday school: and as our worthy Esquire has given me some Bibles to distribute among the children who know how to make a good use of them, I shall give you one of the best of them. [Mr. Lovegood gives him a Bible.]—Remember now that this is your own book, and the book of God's own writing, to make us wise unto salvation. Now turn round and thank the 'Squire for his present.

Tho. [With a bow down to the ground.] I thank your honour a thousand times.

The reader is to take this as a brief sample among many, how Mr. Lovegood examined some of the children; and as an illustration of what he conceived to be the wisest way to impress the truths of religion on their young minds. He was well convinced that a mere catechism enforced upon a child's memory by painful exertions, however good in its place, was likely to produce but a slender effect, without a more familiar method of instruction, administered according to the ability and disposition of each child. After a considerable time being employed in examining several of the girls, as well as the boys, they were all led through the park to Brookfield Hall, where they found a bountiful, but plain feast provided for them, with plenty of pies and puddings for the children.

Supper being ended, the following hymn was sung.

CHRIST'S CARE FOR HIS LAMBS.

LET praise to our Shepherd begin,
Who tenderly makes us his care;
Who came to redeem us from sin,
And guard us from every snare.

His pastoral love we adore,
 Who clasps in so dear an embrace,
 The souls that his mercy implore,
 To save them by infinite grace.

Nor shall the poor lambs of his flock
 Want pasture, or clear-running stream;
 Or shadow of sheltering rock,
 Or warmth of enlivening beam:
 He too in his bosom shall bear
 The weary that pant for his rest;
 No lamb of them all but shall share
 A heaven of love in his breast.

Then helpless and weak as we are,
 O let us for ever abide
 Close under the eye of his care,
 Feed all the day long at his side!
 He will not at a moment depart;
 O why from his side should we rove;
 Or grieve his compassionate heart,
 So plenteous in mercy and love!

After this, young Mr. Merryman, by Mr. Lovegood's desire, concluded the festivity with a tender and affectionate prayer, while his heart was much impressed with the recollection of what a different course he once pursued, before, by Mr. Lovegood's ministry, he was brought to know the grace of God in truth. Mr. Littleworth's fitch was next produced, and after such apologies as might be expected from the Farmer to *his honour and madam Worthy*, it was catered among the children, according to the size of the families: though, when he was carving for young Thomas, it evidently appeared that the Farmer's knife very favourably slipped aside, through a little partiality on his behalf.

The Farmer and his family were next ushered into the parlour to tea. Miss Polly and Miss Patty continued to expose themselves by pretending to talk about fashions, and by making use of fine words, which they ill understood, while Mr. Lovegood constantly aimed at giving a more profitable turn

to the conversation, which was easily done between the Farmer and Miss Nancy. Henry's conversion, and the fears and hopes concerning his return, still engrossed the substance of all he had to say; the anxiety of his heart for his beloved Henry being now the first subject on every occasion. On their return home Miss Polly and Miss Patty had enough to do in finding fault with each other respecting manners and dress, and such trifling subjects, while the simple, yet profitable, conversation between the Farmer, Miss Nancy, and Thomas, proved their hearts were truly fixed on "the one thing needful." Thomas, however, had abundance of fault to find with himself, being full of fears lest the condescending familiarity of the *'Squire* had thrown him off his guard; he being unacquainted with the unaffected simplicity and real *courtesy* of his own manners, was not sensible that the best Christian is the best gentleman, all over the world.

DIALOGUE VIII.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

FARMER LITTLEWORTH, HIS SON HENRY, MR.
LOVEGOOD, AND OTHERS.

HENRY LITTLEWORTH was detained at sea by contrary winds three weeks longer than was expected. Many reports having prevailed of storms and shipwrecks, the Farmer's mind was filled with sad apprehensions for the fate of his son; the subject of his daily talk, and now the object of his most affectionate regard. At length he arrived at Mr. Vintner's, of the George, and, according to the plan preconcerted, was directed to Mr. Traffick's of the shop, where the following letter from his father, after the usual salutations, was put into his hands.

"MY MOST DEAR CHILD,

"FOR sure and certain I never shall be able to thank the Lord enough for your letter. Oh, how I bless his name that he has converted and saved such a wicked sinner as you have been! but you know, my dear Harry, I was a much *wickeder* sinner than you; and our most merciful Saviour has visited me with his grace; and now how happy and joyful shall we be together as soon as you come home! But I beg and pray of you, my dear child, when we meet, don't tell me how wicked you have been to me, or I must tell you how wicked I have been to you, in setting you such a bad example. Oh, no! we must

never talk to each other about these matters; for this would cut me to the heart, and kill me outright: for as I write, I can scarcely see to go on, because the tears run down my cheeks so fast while I think of the wonderful love of Christ, which has met with two such vile sinners as we have been: and since he has loved and pardoned us both, how sweetly shall we love and pardon each other!

“My dear child, that very Mr. Lovegood, which we all used so to ridicule, is the dear man who has brought my soul to God. Nobody can tell what a dear servant of God he is; and I and your sister Nancy go to his church every Sunday, and he is to meet you at our house the first day you come home; and Billy Traffick, a most sweet Christian boy, and who always attends our church, is to come up to our house with you; and as you are lame, I shall send a horse for you; so I need write no more, as I hope to see you so soon. My dear child, from your affectionate father,

SIMON LITTLEWORTH.”

The reader must be left to suppose, after Henry had read the letter, what were his feelings on such an unexpected, yet joyful and affecting event. No wonder that under such circumstances he was too much surprised and affected to speak. After some time, Billy Traffick began the conversation.

Billy. Come, come; wipe your eyes, and praise the Lord for his mercies; see what love and grace he has been pouring down upon your family, and upon many more in these parts since you left us.

Henry. What! and are my father and my sister Nancy indeed converted to God! And does Mr. Lovegood preach the gospel to poor sinners at Brookfield church?

Billy. Yes indeed, your father, by the grace of

God, for nearly these two years, has been a wonderfully altered man; and Mr. Lovegood is a most blessed and affectionate minister of Christ.

Henry. [Still weeping.] My God! what mercies are these to such a vile wretch as I have been! What between joy and grief, how shall I support it! and how shall I be able to meet my dear father!

Mr. Traffick. Mr. Henry, your father has desired that I would mention to you not to say any thing respecting matters that are past, as that will affect him too much. You are to go home as if nothing had happened.

Henry. How can that be? for, Oh, what blessed things have happened since I, a poor prodigal sinner, left his house near four years ago! But are there no signs of grace upon the hearts of my poor mother and my other two sisters?

Traffick. I fear not at present; though I am told your mother is not so vehement against your worthy father as formerly; for Mr. Dolittle and Dr. Dronish at first tried to set all the parish against him.

Henry. Why, Mr. Traffick, was not you bred a dissenter? I thought you always went to Dr. Dronish's meeting.

Traffick. Yes, Mr. Henry; but since God in his gracious providence has sent Mr. Lovegood into these parts, we have been convinced that it is better to follow the gospel, than a party. So we have left the meeting, and do not mean to go there again, unless we should have the same gospel preached there as once was, when old Mr. Trueman was the minister in my father's time; so we all go to Brookfield church, excepting my old uncle, who says he is determined to live and die in the religion in which he was bred and born.

Billy. And we shall hope to see you there next Sunday; yes, and it is sacrament Sunday, and my

father and I always attend the communion. We don't mind about being bred dissenters, provided we can hold communion with the people of God.

Henry. Oh! how this again overcomes me! I have had a thousand fears what my poor father would say to me, for my former bad conduct; then how he would oppose me on account of religion; for though in all other respects I knew the Lord hath inclined my heart to be as obedient as a lamb; yet on a Sunday I was determined to travel, lame as I am, twenty miles a day, provided I could but reach any place of worship, whether at a church or a meeting of any sort, where I could hear the blessed sound of the Gospel; but instead of all my fears, God has provided for me all that my heart could wish, and almost close to the door. Well, there by the help of God I will go, and to the sacrament too, that we may all give ourselves up entirely to the Lord, if Mr. Lovegood will permit me.

Billy. There is no doubt of that; for your letter, which you sent from Antigua, affected him almost as much as it did your father; and he believes, by the grace of God, your heart is really changed.

Henry. O, how little I thought of such blessed events as these when I left my father's house, while living in all sorts of sin; and what will my dear father feel, when he sees his poor prodigal kneeling by him, at that most blessed feast of love? Yes, there I will go, and at once join myself with the dear children of God wherever I can find them; that all may know that, by the grace of God, I am determined to give myself up to lead another life.

[Mr. Traffick is called into the shop, and Will Frolick comes in.]

Frolick. [To Mr. Traffick.] Is not Harry Littleworth come from sea? I hear he is at your house; mayn't I step in and ask him how he does?

Traffick. Yes; but you won't find him the same man now as when you and he, and the rest of you, kept our town in a perpetual uproar.

Frolick. Why, I have heard that he has received a bad wound, and that since then he has taken a mighty religious turn; and I wonder at that, when he was such an admirer of Paine's "Age of Reason."

Traffick. Reason! what do you mean by reason, while you were all living together like so many madmen?

Frolick. Well, though his father has been frequently *preaching* about his wonderful conversion at Mapleton market, I suppose he is not so grave but what he will shake hands with me, if I go in to see him, for he was a merry fellow when he left us.

Traffick. You know the old proverb, Mr. Frolick, "Be merry and wise;" but when we were at family prayer, while you, and he, and others, were revelling about the town, you used to disturb us by rapping at our windows and doors; if this was a sign that you were merry, it was no evidence that either you or he, in those days, were wise. But you may go in to him if you please. My son and he are together. [Frolick goes in.]

Frolick. Well, Harry, how are you? I am glad to see you home again; for we all began to think you was gone to the bottom.

Henry. I thank you, William; but you must suppose it would have been a terrible sinking to me if I had gone to the bottom; for you know the horrid state we were both in before I went to sea; neither of us were fit to live in this world or the next.

Frolick. Why, I am told you are become very religious; but as for my part, I confess, I had rather stop a little longer first.

Billy. Really, it is shocking to hear you talk ; it is dreadful, when people can scoff even at death itself. You know it was but the other day that young Captain Rakish, my Lord's second son, died, after about three day's illness, of a stoppage in his bowels; and it is well known in what despair and agony he left this world, and what awful things he said to his father for having encouraged and introduced him into all sorts of sin; and what he said to another young officer who came to see him just before he died.

Frolick. Why, what did he say ?

Billy. " I have been assisting with you to conquer the enemies of our king and country, while I have madly suffered myself to be conquered by the enemy of souls." And then he cried, " The battle is fought, the battle is fought, the battle is fought; but the victory is lost for ever." I would not have lived and died as he did for a thousand such worlds as this.

Frolick. Well, well, for all this I should like to live a merry life while I live; and be a good penitent when I come to die; and that is my creed. I have no notion of being a saint too soon.

Henry. My dear William, let me be serious with you. I confess with shame I have been till of late among the number of those " fools who make a mock of sin;" I now grieve to think what a bold, hardened profligate I have been; and how I have corrupted you and others by my bad example. I confess, I have had deep sorrow for my sinful conduct; but never felt any remorse in the blessed service of God. While I lived, as I fear you live, I tried all I could to laugh and joke away my misery; but in all my mirth I carried a gnawing hell within. I was a self-tormentor every moment of my life, and I know that none of us could bear reflection; and in what we call-

ed our jovial songs, we could blasphemously curse the passing bell for interrupting us, and still continue our rebellious, profane, and filthy conversation; despising all subordination to the laws of God and man, because, in the height of our wickedness, we could not bear the least restraint. And what were our reflections when we were in our beds! As to myself, never could I sleep, till I was worn out by my rakish conduct. While I slept I was tormented by dreams; and when I awoke I rose with nothing but discontent and disgust against myself. The sight even of my parents was a horror to me, while the extravagant fruits of my vile conduct I dreaded every moment of my life. From this hell of misery I made for myself, I was madly driven into another hell—a man of war! There I saw sin in its horrid perfection, without any of those earthly gratifications to comfort me, which I found in my father's house, and which I so ungratefully forsook. I now most humbly implore your forgiveness for the mischief I have done you, my dear William, and others by my conduct, and affectionately request you to seek forgiveness from that most merciful Saviour, whose free salvation I must for ever adore in changing the heart, and pardoning the sins of a wretch once so vile. I now live a wonder to myself, that my own wickedness has not procured my eternal ruin. Let one who has been your fellow sinner intreat you to become his fellow traveller in the blessed ways of God.

[Henry was now so overcome by his own thoughts that he could say no more, till he was interrupted by a message that Thomas Newman had brought the horses, to convey him to his father's house at Gracehill farm.

Mr. Traffick comes in from the shop.]

Traffick. Mr. Henry, Thomas Newman is come with the horses; you must get yourself ready.

Henry. Thomas Newman! why is that the poor man who worked for my father, and the same we used to ridicule on account of his religion?

Traffick. Yes; and a truly good man he is; he is only gone to the butcher's for a joint of veal, to be roasted for supper; for your father says, they must have a piece of the *fatted calf*, that they may all eat and be merry, because you are come home.

Henry. What, for such a wretch as I! [*Henry weeps and adds,*] Oh, what a loving, forgiving, uniting spirit does the grace of Christ create among those whose hearts have tasted of his love!

[*Henry is mounted, and rides home with Thomas, and Billy Traffick walks with them.*]

Henry. Well, Thomas, how do my dear father and mother do?

Tho. Oh, Sir, my master is very well considering; but he *takes on* wonderfully at the thoughts of seeing you.

Henry. And well he may, when he receives into his house such an ungrateful wretch as I have been!

Tho. O, no, master Henry, that is not the cause; it is because the Lord has so mercifully met with you and changed your heart; aye, and it is wonderful how *his* heart has been changed by the grace of God since you left us.

Henry. Why, Thomas, they say Mr. Lovegood is a most faithful and affectionate preacher of the gospel.

Tho. Aye, that he is, as ever lived: to be sure, he is the finest man in all the world; and it will do you good to see how my old master stands up in the pew, and how, at times, the tears keep running down his cheeks, while he hears him preach the precious word of life among us poor sinners; and you can have no *conceivance* what a many good people there are up and down the country; and how

our church is crowded Sunday after Sunday; and what a many abominable wicked sinners have been converted to God, and how happy and loving we all are together.

Henry. Why, what you tell me seems quite like a dream: it is like coming out of hell into heaven.—But is not that my father and one of my sisters coming to meet us?

Tho. Yes; it is your father and Miss Nancy.—Dear old gentleman! he is coming out to meet you, as the father came to meet the prodigal in the Gospel. How he has been talking about you, and counting the days till you come home, for he expected you full a fortnight or three weeks before this.

Henry. O, what shall I do! how shall I meet him! how he lifts up his hands! and how he seems to be affected! Lift me off, Thomas—I am so lame. What a meeting this will be! The Lord support me!

Under such circumstances the newly converted prodigal and parent met. The conversation was too interrupted to be related. At the door of the house Henry was embraced by his mother. Had he not been prevented, he would have been directly upon his knees to have begged her pardon for having given much severer pains to her heart by his conduct, than ever she felt for him as his mother, when she brought him into the world. Miss Polly all the time completely kept up the character of the elder son in the parable; she would neither baste the veal, nor melt the butter, nor draw the beer, nor even peel a potatoe; but shewed such tempers as exemplified a complete contrast between the spirit of envy, and the spirit which is of God.

We suppose the course of the dialogue to be discontinued for an hour, and by that time Sam comes

up in haste from the vicarage, having been sent as a purpose-messenger to Brookfield, to announce the arrival of Henry to Mr. Lovegood. Mr. Lovegood soon follows, and is introduced.

Far. Harry, my child, this is our dear minister who brought your poor father—[he weeps and adds] to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Loveg. to Littleworth. My good friend, though I rejoice with you on this happy event, yet you had need support, that you may rejoice with trembling and with holy moderation.—(to Henry.) My dear youth, we are most heartily rejoiced at this event, and at the good evidence you have given that a divine change has been wrought on your heart.

Henry. I hope and trust it has; for you must know, Sir, what a wretch I was before I went to sea.

Loveg. No matter what has been; the Lord, I trust, has cast all those sins behind his back. Consider, by the grace of God, what is to be; for in the gospel the grace of Christ is provided for us in time, and the glory of Christ in eternity.

Henry. Oh, Sir, I am ashamed to look you in the face, when, with the deepest contrition, I consider in my wicked wild days what cruel words I have uttered against you, and what abominable stories I was glad to hear, and even invent, to expose your innocent character. I would beg your pardon a thousand times.

Loveg. Oh no, Sir, we must have no begging of pardons. If God has pardoned us, we can easily forgive each other: but there is nothing new in all this; for Paul, before his conversion, was “injurious and opprobrious;” we therefore, who have been crucified with Christ, and who have been made partakers of the power of his spiritual resurrection, are to suppose, that all our former evils are left behind in

the grave from which he arose; they are to be buried and forgotten, as though they had never been.

Henry. Oh, sir, how glad shall I be to hear you preach concerning these great things, and about this blessed Christ, at Brookfield Church! and William Traffick tells me it is Sacrament Sunday; and will you let me be there, dear Sir?—[To his father] and will you, my dear father, forgive me, and let me kneel down by you at that blessed feast of love?

Far. O, my dear child! don't talk so; don't talk so; it quite breaks my heart; all is forgotten and forgiven already.

Mr. Lovegood, finding that the sluices of affection were opened afresh, and remembering that it was the father's design to establish family prayer on the return of his son, and that he was expected to introduce that very profitable service into the family, wisely called for the Bible before supper. Once he thought of reading and illustrating the 15th of Luke, on the Prodigal's Return, but discreetly forbore, knowing that the feelings of the family, upon a very similar event, were already excited to the utmost.—He chose therefore the 51st Psalm, as being very congenial to that broken and contrite spirit, which was now exemplified among them.

After prayer the supper was soon introduced, hospitable and plain. Two fowls, and a large fat ham, with plenty of vegetables, puddings and pies, were added to the piece of the fatted calf already brought from Mapleton. For the Farmer having invited many of his neighbours to this first family prayer, on such an occasion, chose that the provision should be plentiful for those in the kitchen, as well as others in the parlour; for now "they began to be merry." One affecting circumstance, however, happened during the festivity in the parlour. The

Farmer, seeing his son's plate nearly emptied, loaded it a second time with what would have satisfied a moderate man for three meals at least, and then plentifully drenched it with melted butter. This act of hospitable affection from the father, again touched the feelings of the son; he looked down on his plate, thus heaped with a Benjamin's mess, and again he wept. Mr. Lovegood called him aside, advising him for a while to withdraw from the company; and they walked and conversed together for some minutes in a large old hall, while Mr. Lovegood thus attempted the word of consolation.

Loveg. My dear youth, it grieves us all to see you so cast down on an occasion which calls for so much thankfulness and joy.

Henry. Oh, sir! what an ungrateful and rebellious wretch have I been against my parents, against my God all the days of my life!

Loveg. Whatever you may have been, yet of this you may most assuredly be persuaded, that now all your past offences your father has entirely forgiven; and has again and again desired me to assure you, that he means to look upon you as if nothing had ever happened to offend him.

Henry. [Weeping still more abundantly.] O, sir, that's the very thing which cuts me to the heart;—not that I suspect my father to be unforgiving; but that I should have been such an ungrateful wretch to grieve such a kind, tender-hearted parent.

[After a little while Henry's spirits were recruited, and he and Mr. Lovegood returned to the parlour. While they continued at the feast, the conversation thus continued.]

Loveg. Well, Mr. Henry, you can now tell us a little more than what we find in your letter of God's gracious dealings with your soul.

Henry. Why, sir, if all the world had told me that I should have experienced such a blessed change, I could not have believed them.

Loveg. Were you filled with much despondency when you first saw the evil tendency of sin?

Henry. Why, sir, I was not so much distressed from an apprehension that there was a hell *for* sin: what I dreaded was a hell *in* sin.

Loveg. Had you no concern about your soul till after you were wounded?

Henry. Not the least.—I am astonished at my wickedness till I was brought, as I supposed, close to the gates of death. Then I was ever framing to my mind, that an angry God was looking at me, and that he hated me: then sin began to flash upon my conscience, and many evils, which I had forgotten, were brought to my mind, as if I had committed them but the day before. Nothing made me fear hell but sin, and now I saw sin worse than hell itself.

Loveg. And how did you get relief?

Henry. While I continued groaning in my hammock, some poor, despised, praying seamen ventured to come near me, when all the ship's crew expected to hear of my death every hour; and when I began to tell them of my evil heart, and evil plight, they seemed quite to rejoice at it. This appeared strange to me at the first, but they soon gave me to understand that there was no coming to Christ but with a wounded conscience. And then I was directed to seek to him for mercy, while his salvation was my only hope.

Loveg. Indeed, and so it is; for nothing but redemption will do for a ruined sinner. When we come to know our own hearts, we are soon delivered from trusting in ourselves, and on our own fancied righteousness.

Henry. Ah, sir, as soon as ever I felt that I was a

ruined sinner, I was fully convinced that Christ alone must be exalted in my salvation. I had no other hope left, but in him.

Loveg. What, had you no serious apprehensions during the time of the engagement, while your eternal state seemed to depend upon the fate of every moment?

Henry. Not the least. And when a poor profane wretch died but a little before, of a mortification through a broken leg, by his falling down the hatchway, I could even hear him all the time curse and swear, because, as he thought, he was not properly attended to, while he lay in his hammock; and when he was told that his leg was in a state of mortification, he sunk into despair, and, even to his last moments, used the most horrid imprecations against his own parents for sending him to-sea, and for introducing him into all sorts of sin.

Far. O, my dear child, what a mercy that my bad example was not the cause of your eternal *ruination*!

Henry. But, blessed be God, father, that is not the case: in a way of wonderful mercy the Lord has met with us both. Come, let us be thankful, and bless the Lord together for his love.

Far. With all my heart, my dear child. [He takes him by the hand, and falls upon his neck, and kisses him most affectionately. Mr. Lovegood again interrupts him, and adds,]

Loveg. But, Mr. Littleworth, your son is to tell us the rest of his story.

Henry. Why, as soon as I began to be better, I joined those praying people, and at once partook with them their lot of ridicule and contempt. We were all despised as the meanest fellows in the ship; though in the time of the engagement they had proved themselves the boldest men among us all.

Loveg. No wonder at that: living Christians need

not be afraid to die, because they who live and believe in Christ can never die. But when you came to Antigua, how was it with you there?

Henry. Sir, the providence of God most favourably and graciously attended me; for as soon as I arrived, I and my comrades in prayer sought after any who were inclined to seek after God; and by a remarkable providence, the town being very full, I found myself quartered at the hut of a poor slave, who knew the grace of God in truth. I could not but from the first admire his mild submission and attention; but before we went to sleep, how was I struck to hear the poor creature say, "My dear Massy; me hope you no be angry if me and my poor wifey and pickaninnies pray to our dear Saviour before we go to bed;" and when I told him that I had been lately taught to pray myself, and should be glad to pray with him, he asked me, "What, Massy! you love our dear Saviour too?" and when I told him I hoped I did, for that he had pardoned my sins, and changed my heart, then he ran directly and embraced me, and said, "O my dear *Broder*, den I love you to de heart, because you love our dear Saviour;" and after this, as you may suppose we soon got acquainted with each other.

Loveg. I suppose, when you got acquainted with this poor good creature, he soon introduced you to the rest of his brethren.

Henry. Yes; and I went directly, and told my praying shipmates what a treasure I had found in this poor slave; and the night after we all met for prayer in his hut; and when we asked him how he came to know about these good things, he told us the most affecting story I ever heard, of his sufferings before he came from Africa, and how mercifully he was brought to the knowledge of the truth by the zeal and attention of the Moravian missionaries, some

years after he had lost his liberty, and been sold as a slave.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Henry, as we shall now, I trust, have frequent interviews with each other, I should be glad if on a future occasion you could recollect some of the most material circumstances of his story, and the narration of them may be profitable to us all; but I dare say, soon after that you got acquainted with their ministers.

Henry. Why directly when poor *Sancho*, for that was his name, could find time, he went and told their minister that there were some *buckra* sailors that loved the Saviour, and the venerable grey-headed man soon came to see us; and as I was then but lately awakened to a sense and sight of my sins, the remembrance of them lay very heavy on my conscience; and I bless God for the consolations I soon began to receive from the affectionate and tender way in which he recommended me to the Son of God for salvation. On the Sunday following all of us went to their Chapel: it was a most affecting sight to behold so large a number of poor blacks, notwithstanding their slavery, rejoicing in the liberty of the Gospel.

Loveg. Blessed be God, the calamities of a christian shall always be counter-balanced by his consolations: it is the privilege of the believer, notwithstanding all his troubles, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Henry. And so it should seem, sir, for during the week *Sancho* took us to see a poor woman singing and rejoicing in dying circumstances, in a manner remarkably glorious; crying out, "My dear Saviour is just coming for me—he has loved me—he has given himself for me! O how he warms my heart, and blesses me—death is now *nothing* to me: how I long to be dissolved, that I may be with my precious Jesus! and how I love all of you, my dear *broders*,

because you love him. In heaven, we shall none of us be cruel against each other, but we shall all be like our loving Saviour, and see him as he is, in all his glory." Thus she went on, praising and blessing God, and triumphing in the forgiving love of Christ.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Henry, we shall have other opportunities to talk over these matters; but we should not conclude this joyful interview without some praises to God for his great goodness in returning you again to your father's house, and bringing you to the knowledge of yourself.

Henry. O, Sir! what an ungrateful wretch should I be, to forget my God after such mercies!

Littlew. My child, you cannot think what a *nice* hymn Mr. Lovegood has made on your conversion and return. Nancy, call in Thomas Newman, that he may pitch the tune.

[Thomas comes in, and the hymn is sung; but poor Henry's harp was on the willows; the case expressed in the hymn was so much his own, that every line brought a fresh tear trickling from his eye.]

THE PENITENT'S SONG OF PRAISE.

Did ever one of Adam's race,
Cost thee, dear Lord, such toil and grace,
Ere this rebellious heart of mine
Was taught to yield to love divine?

Vile was my heart, deep plung'd in sin,
A dismal den of thieves within;
Where ev'ry lust presum'd to dwell,
The hateful progeny of hell.

A deep apostate from my God,
I trampled on the Saviour's blood:
I scorn'd his mercy, mock'd his pain,
And crucified my Lord again.

How great the pow'r, how vast the sway,
That first constrain'd me to obey!
How large the grace thou didst impart,
That conquer'd sin, and won my heart!

But, lo! the chief of sinners now
Is brought before thy throne to bow:
Surely this mighty pow'r from thee,
Can conquer all which conquers me.

Hail dearest Lord my choicest love!
By pity drawn from realms above!
Eternal praise to Love Divine,
That won a heart so vile as mine!

The hymn being ended, Mr. Lovegood offered up another short prayer, and the whole family retired.

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUE IX.

REV. MR. LOVEGOOD AND MR. WORTHY'S FAMILY AT FARMER LITTLEWORTH'S.

THE EVILS OF THE SLAVE TRADE DELINEATED.

ABOUT three weeks after Henry's return, Mr. Worthy, mindful of Farmer Littleworth's invitation, attended, with Mrs. Worthy and their eldest daughter, to drink tea at Gracehill Farm. It has already been noticed, that all correspondence between Mr. Worthy and the family of the Blusters of Revel Hall was completely closed. Nor could he keep up any further intimacy with Lord Rakish's family, than to give them a morning visit after their return from town, or some other places of dissipation. A man of his superior mind could discover, that, while the scriptures directed him to be *courteous*, yet, knowing that "evil communications corrupt good manners," he was also instructed to be *cautious*. His maxim was "to be civil to the great, but intimate with the good." He therefore never supposed he disgraced himself by a familiar intercourse with persons of inferior rank, while they sustained the character of real goodness of disposition and conduct. Mr. Lovegood, as we naturally suppose, was invited to be one of the party. Mrs. Lovegood, ever attentive to her domestic concerns, and burthened with the *large* care of a *little* family, though the sincere wish of all parties, could seldom attend on these occasions.

Mr. and Mrs. Worthy and Mr. Lovegood made it a point to come early, as they wished for some conversation with the newly converted prodigal, as also to gain some information respecting the poor negroes in Antigua. After the accustomed salutations, they were ushered by the farmer and his wife into the best parlour, where Miss Nancy had been preparing all things for their reception; and thus the conversation began.

Farmer. Ah dear! had any one told me, three years ago, that I should have had such an honour as to have our worthy 'squire and his lady at our house, I could never have believed them, when I used to laugh at your honour's religion: but, the Lord know-, it was when I had none of my own.

Mr. Worthy. Well, but you know, my good friend, we were all nearly alike, till we were better instructed. But where is your son Henry? for we are come to hear something of the gracious providences which have brought about this wonderful change upon his mind; and which have attended him ever since he left these parts in his thoughtless days.

Far. He is only gone out with Thomas and Sam to see your honour's horses put properly into the stable: but, for sure, it is to *admiration* what a blessed boy he is, and how loving and good the Lord has made him; it quite overcomes me when I think of it! we seem to enjoy a little heaven upon earth.

Lovegood. They who are born again are born to enjoy two heavens instead of one: a heaven of grace here, and a heaven of glory hereafter. But, through the mercy of God, what a wonderful alteration has taken place in your family, when compared to what it was three years ago, when you were all living without God in the world!

Far. Aye, so I thought last Tuesday evening, when my son and Billy Traffic, and three or four other young men that frequent our church, came

and spent the evening at our house; and Billy Traffick brought with him the Pilgrim's Progress. What a precious book for sure that is! and they say the man that wrote it was nothing but a poor tinker: Aye, and a very wicked sinner, as wicked as ever I was, before the Lord converted him.

Loveg. Yes, and what a proof is this what the grace of God can do on the vilest of sinners; as also what wisdom God can communicate to his children, independent of human learning, however good that may be in its place: but that book is not less entertaining than instructive. Happy are they who find they are travelling with the pilgrim towards the celestial city!

Far. Well, I do trust that some of us have got into that blessed road; though to my mind I *hobble* as bad spiritually as I do naturally. But how Harry was affected when he read about Christian's burden falling off his back when he came within sight of the cross! Dear child! what a tender heart he has! what would I give if my heart was but as tender as his! and for sure what two sweet prayers we had from Billy Traffick, and my son, before they went away!

[Henry's appearance in the parlour prevented any further conversation on that subject. After some salutations the dialogue recommenced.]

Wor. Well, Mr. Henry, we are come somewhat sooner than expected to commemorate the goodness of God in your conversion and return. We shall be very glad soon to dispatch the ceremonies of the tea-table, that we may have time to hear of some further events than what we were acquainted with, before your arrival.—(*To the farmer.*) But, Mr. Littleworth, where are your other two daughters, Miss Polly and Miss Patty?

Far. 'Las, Sir! I am afraid they think they are

not yet dressed fine enough to receive your honour. Ah dear! how glad I should be if they spent but half the time in meditation and prayer they now spend at their *twilight*? there is no *conceivance* what pride there is in all our wicked hearts!—[*Mrs. Worthy and family smile; the Farmer continues*].—Why I thought I should make some blunders in my *countrified fashion* of talk; but my daughters have put a sort of a *petticoat thing* round their table, and I thought they called it a *twilight*; but my father loved his money too well to give us much *larning*.

Mrs. Wor. Never mind, my good friend, the mistake of calling a toilette a *twilight*: we all understand you.

[Just then Miss Polly and Miss Patty came down from their *twilight*, and such curious tawdry figures as might be expected. Miss Polly being the eldest, did the honours of the tea table, when she had enough to do to instruct Sam, primed up in his livery, how to conduct himself in his office as footman, the conversation having been interrupted by their appearance, was thus resumed.]

Loveg. Mr. Henry, we have already been acquainted with many of the circumstances which first brought about the blessed change that has taken place upon your mind, though we have heard but little from you of what passed when you was in Antigua, after you became acquainted with the Moravians. Besides, Mr. Worthy is a subscriber to their mission, as also to other missionary societies lately established in our own country: he would therefore be glad of a further narration of what has come to your knowledge respecting these good people, and of their efforts to evangelize the poor slaves.

Wor. Though I have no doubt of the authenticity of the reports we have received, from every quarter respecting the cruelties exercised over these miserable creatures, yet I should be glad of your infor-

mation concerning the general state of the poor African slaves, so far as it has come within your personal knowledge.

Hen. O, Sir! the barbarous usage they receive from us is inexpressible. I have seen heaps of them myself bought and sold like a set of beasts in a common market. I believe many more, on an average, than eighty thousand of these poor creatures are annually transported out of their own country, to be made the objects of this abominable traffic: and it is amazing what a number of these, amounting to nearly one-third, according to a most brutal expression, *die in seasoning*; and can it be wondered at, when they are taken from a life of comparative ease and indolence, to a life of the most cruel labour, and are kept in perpetual terror under the lash of their drivers all the time, with their hearts ready to break, having been lately torn from their dearest friends and connexions, and with no other expectation than to drag on a most miserable existence till, by the hand of death itself, which many of them most anxiously desire, they escape the clutches of their tormentors.

Wor. Did you say more than eighty thousand, Mr. Henry? Are you correct in your information? I thought it was about half that number.

Hen. Sir, upwards of half that number are cruelly exported from their own country for the use of the British islands alone. I myself saw, in the Kingston Gazette, three thousand of them advertised for sale at one time: the importation for one year only, into different islands, amounted to thirty-five thousand; and as the islands belonging to other nations must want at least as many as ourselves, I believe I should have been nearer the mark if I had said one hundred thousand than eighty thousand.

Wor. What horrid robbery on the persons of our

fellow creatures, and what dreadful murder of human lives! for the conclusion certainly is, that not less than all that number are wanted *to keep up the stock*, to succeed those who lose their lives by their cruel banishment, or who have been *killed off* by barbarous treatment and hard labour. For it seems the calculation has been reduced to a nicety, how far it may be most profitable *to work them down*, as you would a set of beasts, *and buy fresh ones*, or *let them breed among themselves*. And it is well known, that, if it were not for the effects of oppression and war, the human race, in every part of the globe, would rapidly increase.

Hen. Yes, Sir; and in all the plantations where these poor creatures are treated with any degree of mercy, they never find themselves under the necessity of resorting to those horrid markets.

Wor. It should also seem the infamous tricks practised to procure them, are the most treacherous and cruel: none of us can be ignorant of the fact, on what frivolous pretences we excite them to war among themselves, that we may gain the advantage of purchasing the unhappy captives, made by the unnatural contests excited among this poor ill-instructed race of our fellow creatures, who otherwise have a disposition to live in mutual peace and harmony with each other. How much more would it become us to civilize and evangelize them, than to do all in our power to add to their natural brutality, that we may afterwards enslave them. Rum, guns, and gunpowder, it seems, are the general bribes given to these *artless* heathens from the *artful* Christians, (so called in this country,) for the purposes of exciting intoxication and bloodshed among them; that, at their expence, we may gratify our abominable ambition and pride.

Hen. O yes, Sir! what you say is all very true. I myself was conversing with one who had been

engaged in this detestable trade not long ago ; and to convince me how many lives are wantonly lost before a few slaves can be procured for the West India islands, he told me several stories, one of which I well remember :—" The commander of an African ship sent to acquaint one of their kings that he wanted *a cargo of slaves* : the king, for the sake of gain, promised to furnish him : and in order to do it, set out, designing to surprise some towns and make all the people prisoners. Some time afterwards the king sent him word he had not succeeded, having attempted to break up two towns, but was twice repulsed ; but that he still hoped for success. He next met his enemies in the open field. A battle was fought which lasted three days, and the engagement was so bloody that four thousand five hundred men were slain on the spot !"

Wor. One shudders at the very relation of these execrable cruelties. But it seems we have other pretexts to cover this horrid trade : we buy them as slaves sold for theft and for adultery ; and even their superstition and ignorance are to serve for our profit, while, for the supposed crime of witchcraft, many innocent sufferers are doomed to slavery through life. Thus we not only fill our colonies with the very refuse of the barbarous Africans, as we call them, (though worse barbarians ourselves ;) but disgrace our national character by becoming the executioners of this most abject race ; and even traverse the seas for that purpose, as though we had not enough of the same crimes to punish at home.

Hen. Yes, Sir, and how unjust the punishment of perpetual slavery, and that oftentimes for crimes that scarcely deserve the name ; but till we tempted them with the lure of gain there were no punishments by perpetual slavery. It seems, notwithstanding we chuse to cry them down as barbarians, that

their punishments were in some measure proportionate to their offences: but is it possible to suppose that near a hundred thousand men, year by year, can deserve such a punishment?

Wor. It is impossible to tell whether they are punished with justice or otherwise; for there is no doubt they take all that are brought, "asking no questions for conscience' sake."

Hen. Sir, there are instances in which they go still farther. They not only take the slaves, but even by treachery have seized the very people that have sold them. In short the whole of this most horrid traffic is made up of every crime that treachery, cruelty, and murder can invent: and if any of the European nations were to act against each other, as we do against these poor creatures, for no other cause than because they are defenceless and ill-instructed, they would be set down as so many monsters instead of men. I think we may safely conclude, that, if we Europeans transport full eighty thousand of these men, we are the cause of murdering as many more before we can procure them. And when we come to calculate on the additions made, year by year, to these miserable beings, it has been proved that not less than half a million of our reasonable fellow creatures in the English islands only, and consequently little less than A WHOLE MILLION, including those belonging to other nations, are at this moment in a state of the most abject slavery, torn from their native lands and dearest connexions; if all, therefore, were to be hanged for committing the same crimes abroad for which they would be sentenced to death at home, I question, if there would be any left to carry on this most infernal trade.

Loveg. When one hears of such wanton and abominable cruelties, what reason have we to fear that

solemn denunciation of divine vengeance. "Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" but our barbarities in war are by no means all we have to answer for. Multitudes are confessedly stolen away by mere craft from their own country; and men-stealers are the very worst of thieves *. What an universal uproar it makes in this land if but one poor child be kidnapped from his parents! but in those unhappy climates we may kidnap all we can catch, with the greatest impunity.

Hen. O, Sir! they are brought over by these methods in great abundance. It is amazing how many poor children are stolen from their parents as soon as they can run alone; and these *half-reared* children they always look upon as their most valuable acquisitions; but what must their poor parents feel on these occasions?

Loveg. What can they know of the feelings of others, who have lost all feelings themselves? These the scripture describes as being "past feeling;" but I am told the Africans are remarkably fond of their children.

Hen. Sir, their fondness and tenderness towards their children, is almost to an extreme; though, for want of better instruction, they frequently grow up sulky and revengeful.

Mrs. Wor. Being myself a mother, it is pleasant to hear of their attention to their offspring. I knew a gentleman in this country, that, out of mere compassion, received into his house an African girl, who had been kidnapped when she was very young: and she was remarkably affectionate and attentive to the children of her charge, and they loved her inexpressibly. Pray, Mr. Henry, what is your opinion of the general disposition of an African?

* "He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, shall surely be put to death." Ex. xxi. 16.

Hen. As far as I could discover, when they are ill used, they become dark, sulky, and resentful to a high degree; but if treated affectionately, and with friendship, they are, in return, the most affectionate and kind: a proof of this you have in a variety of instances. Where a planter uses them with lenity as a family of his fellow-creatures, though still his slaves, they would fight and die for him. I heard of an instance of a worthy gentleman, who bought a young slave for his travelling servant; designing when he came of age to give him his liberty. And when he told him he was no longer his slave, and that he was at liberty to leave him as soon as he pleased; he cried out with many tears, "Me leave you, my dear massey, me no leave you, no never; me no want better wages dan to serve my dear massey; if you turn me out of one door me come in at de oder; me never leave my dear massey; no never, never."

Wor. What extreme cruelty, to injure and enslave a race of our fellow creatures, whose minds are capable of such noble and generous sensations!

Hen. Yes, and further evidence we have of this in the love they bear towards their ministers, who, with remarkable affection and attention, preach to them the merciful love of God our Saviour towards mankind, and the tender love we ought to shew towards each other for the Saviour's sake. In their public meetings they appear to me to resemble a swarm of bees fixing around the queen bee of the hive, all hanging upon her. Her life is their life, and her death is their death. They have an uncommon attachment to their ministers, and all of them seem to be drawn by a sort of silken cord of affection, which they have neither power nor inclination to resist. They and their ministers with them give you quite the idea of artless shepherds with their harmless flocks. To be sure there is a differ-

ence evidently between them, yet it is amazing the good which has been done among them by the introduction of the gospel ; and many of the planters see so much of the good effects of it, that they do all in their power to encourage and promote such preaching on their plantations, and will give a much greater price for a Christian slave, than for another.

Loveg. Well, Mr. Henry, and just so we should all cleave around the blessed person of the Chief Shepherd, and then we shall prove the truth of the proverb, " They are well kept whom the Lord keeps : " but some people will say, in vindication of this trade, that the negroes are better off in a state of slavery in the West Indies than in a state of freedom among themselves ; though we have but little proof of it from what has hitherto been noticed.

Hen. Under some accidental circumstances, where their owners are merciful and humane, I confess their situation may be but little worse, if quite so bad, as some of the peasantry in our own country ; being allowed a decent plat of ground for their own cultivation and support. But they have minds as well as ourselves ; and they must still feel they are slaves, and that all their happiness rests merely on the uncertain circumstance, whether their master is a man or a brute. In many instances, to my certain knowledge, their situation is rendered far more miserable than if they were brutes themselves. Their food is so coarse and bad, that nothing but necessity could compel them to eat it ; while their labour and their punishments are severe and cruel. They have an expression among themselves, that they are fed with " a fish with one eye : " that is, a herring split asunder to serve two of them, with the little they can raise among themselves. As to their punishments, I am told, some of them have been tormented with the thumb screw ; one was tortured in

an iron coffin filled with holes, placed close to a fire ; another I heard of, who was suspended in an iron cage, to be eaten by ravenous birds of prey, and lived some days in that misery ; and many have been entirely worked and whipped to death by cruel masters.

Loveg. How can a God of mercy bear with a nation so completely vile ! but I trust there are the righteous among us, who will still save our land. But I was told by a very worthy Moravian minister, who called upon me a few weeks ago in his way to their settlement in Fulneck, that their situation has been softened of late.

Hen. Yes, Sir ; as soon as they heard that a vote in parliament had been passed for the abolition of the slave trade, they became less cruel in their punishments, and enacted laws in their favour ; but these laws cannot be very well observed while no negro is allowed to give evidence against a white man. Nothing could so effectually prevent these calamities, as an abolition of the trade itself, as it relates to fresh importations ; as by this step it would be rendered absolutely necessary to use them with mercy, that they may increase among themselves. And it has been proved to demonstration, that such a step would be not less advantageous to the interest of the nation, than to the cause of humanity.

Wor. Why then the very best that can be said is, that they are taken out of a bad state and put into another by *us Christians*, as we are called, abundantly worse. But what further proof need we of this, than that, after they have been conquered or kidnapped, they are torn from their families and tenderest connections, and shipped on board those horrid prisons provided for their transportation, and there chained, man to man ; and, till of late, so

closely confined, that many of them were positively killed by their most cruel confinement; and if they do not now die so fast as formerly, by being crowded together,* yet this cannot prevent them from dying of broken hearts; while the survivors, after they are landed, have nothing before them but perpetual slavery, there to receive perhaps no better treatment than what you, Mr. Littleworth, would give to an ox or a horse, because you are afraid of losing your profits by losing your beast.

Far. Well, now I can assure your honour, that though for many years I have been such a *neglectful* sinner about the state of my soul, yet I never could bear to see any dumb creature in misery; many and many a time in my youthful days have I set up half the night when a cow was likely to calve. Aye, and the poor oxen, because I love to take notice of them and feed them, and give them a pat when they return from plow, it is to *admiration* how well they know me, and how fond they seem to be of me; and I have felt more of this since I have known the Lord than ever I did before.

Mrs. Littlew. To be sure our master is very tender about dumb creatures, he would not let our old house dog, Watch, be killed for ever so long a time, though he got so dirty and nasty; and then he would send to the *doctor's* for some strong *sleeping stuff*, that he might not know when he died.

Loveg. Well, Mrs. Littleworth, this is a full proof of the excellency of real Christianity; nothing like the love of Christ to soften our hard hearts and fill us with universal love, not only towards each other, but also to every creature of God that is innocent and useful in its kind.

*-I am told. that the law on this point is now most shamefully evaded.

Miss Polly. Is your honour's tea sweet enough?
(To Mrs. Worthy and daughter) Madam and Miss,
 I hope I make it to your liking.

Wor. O yes, Miss Polly, and if, like some good people, I could have conceived that the remedy was in anywise likely to be proportionate to the disease, knowing so well the selfishness of mankind, I had never touched another lump of sugar while I live.
(To Henry) But, Mr. Henry, what further do you know about the situation of these poor slaves during what is called the Middle Passage.

Hen. Why, sir, while we were lying off Jamaica, I saw one of those horrid African traders land its miserable cargo, and afterwards, being in his majesty's service, was permitted to go on board.

Wor. Why then, you know a deal about it.

Hen. Sir, I have known enough to make my blood run cold.

Wor. Did you see these poor creatures landed, and afterwards sold?

Hen. O yes, Sir, I saw it! And as far as I could understand it, nothing can equal the art, excepting the cruelty exercised against these ignominious sufferers on that occasion, for the purposes of our luxury and pride. When a ship, *full slaved*, as they call it, appears off shore, all are alert. Sometimes they are sold on board, and then, like a set of criminals condemned to be hanged in our own land, who have their irons knocked off before the halter is fixed upon their necks, they are washed, shaved, and dressed, and their skins oiled in order to give them a youthful and healthy look. The tricks of *horse jockies* in this country are never to be compared to the tricks of the *slave jockies* in the West Indies. Every art is used to shave and dress them in such a manner, as to hide every grey hair, and all appearances of age. And, till of late, a most horrid

scramble for these poor creatures used to take place. The general bargain being struck, these prizes of blood are exhibited, and then all are left to avail themselves, at a signal given, to seize the best slaves they can procure.

Wor. What must these poor creatures have thought of such a scramble? if they thought of our general character they must have supposed that Christians are devils, and that Christianity was forged in Hell. But how are they disposed of now?

Hen. They are brought on shore, while the most knavish tricks are still practised by these dealers in human flesh. O, Sir, this was a sight that cut me to the heart beyond whatever I saw before!

[Here Henry drops a tear, the Farmer catches the sympathetic flame, and says to Mr. Lovegood.]

Far. Dear Sir, what a heart the Lord has given my dear child! Who could have thought it, when we all know what a wicked sinner he was but a little time ago?

[Mrs. Littleworth is also very much affected, and addresses Mr. Lovegood.]

Mrs. Littlew. Well, Sir, I must confess, that Henry is a charming boy since he has *taken to religion*. I wish, with all my heart, I was like him. *(To her husband.)* And, master, if I have been cross with you about religion, I hope you'll forgive me, for I know I have done wrong.

Littlew. (Quite overcome.) O, my dear wife, what joy it will be for me to travel with you towards the celestial city, as Master Bunyan calls it, now as we are coming towards the latter end of our lives!

[Mr. and Mrs. Worthy, and Mr. Lovegood were so affected at this turn of the conversation, that for a while it was discontinued ; the writer also having been somewhat affected, as the reporter of these events, begs thus to close the first part of the present Dialogue, which, directly as time permits, he proposes, by the blessing of God, to re-assume.]

DIALOGUE X.



THE EVILS OF THE SLAVE TRADE FARTHER

DELINEATED.

DURING the interval of silence created by the affectionate and sympathetic feelings of the company, the tea-table was cleared, fresh coals were put upon the fire, the hearth was swept up, the curtains were let down, the mould candles, bought on purpose for this occasion, were lighted, Miss Polly having put a very nice piece of fringed paper round the bottoms of them, on account of their fine company; and thus the conversation recommenced.

Wor. I am so much interested in this most affecting narration, that I should be glad, when your spirits are sufficiently recruited, if you could but tell me, how these poor slaves behaved themselves when they were thus exposed to sale, and what you saw on that horrid occasion.

Hen. Notwithstanding every art to set them off to the best of their power, and to make them look as cheerful as they can, by their flattering promises, yet many of them appeared to me as if their hearts were ready to break with grief and despair, while their purchasers, with the utmost indifference, examined them one after another, as people would a parcel of horses at a fair. Yes, and they talked of a *damaged* slave, as we do of a *damaged* horse, while some of them wanted *working slaves*, and others of them *breeding slaves*; for all the children born in slavery are not, according to the law of nature, the

property of their parents, but of their owners; yes, and when these planters and their overseers have children by these poor negroes, instead of having any regard to the offspring of their vicious passions, they will suffer even these their own children to be bred up in slavery like others. I remember hearing a story of this sort which affected me exceedingly.

Wor. If it be not an improper question to ask before the company now present, what was the story?

Hen. Why, Sir, one came to the trader for a *breeding slave*; and he presented him to one who looked very sickly and weak. The trader told him that he could answer for that girl, as she was with child when he bought her; that they were in hopes to have had the husband too, who was a fine young fellow, but he being terribly resolute in resisting as long as he could, while they were *breaking up* their town, they were obliged to kill him; that about the middle of the passage the girl miscarried, and that it had been a considerable expence to *keep her alive*; that she was a strong healthy girl, and would do either for *breeding* or *labour*, provided she did not die of the *sulks*.

Loveg. Or, in other words, die of a broken heart, through the barbarous usage of these monsters.

Hen. Yes, Sir, it means all that; for take whatever care you will of them, which a captain will naturally do for his own interest, it is amazing how many of them die one after another. All attempts to air them upon the deck, to make them dance even by the lash of a whip, against their wills, for the sake of giving them exercise, that their health may be preserved, can be of no avail: they are made quite sick at heart, and even when they have been forced to take food against their wills, they have immediately sickened and again cast it up; and it is supposed

principally from this cause, one-third of them actually die on the passage. You may judge how miserable they are, when they are obliged to be watched very closely, lest they should destroy themselves to get rid of their misery with their lives, which many have done by throwing themselves overboard, or by other methods, when they had it in their power; but the case of another poor family affected me still more.

Wor. What was that, Mr. Henry?

Mrs. Wor. Really, Mr. Henry, your stories are so affecting about these poor creatures, that I do not know if I shall have sufficient resolution to sit and hear them. My poor daughter seems quite overcome by it already.

Miss. Wor. Yes, Ma'am, but if you please, I should like to hear it, as it makes me thankful to think how happy we are in this country in comparison of others.

Wor. But it is by no means to our credit, while we are so tenacious of liberty in our own land, that we should be allowed to entail the curse of slavery upon others; and for no other reason, as I can find, but because they are of a different complexion to ourselves. All this is sad selfish work. But let us try if we cannot hear your other story.

Hen. Why, Sir, a man and his wife, each of them I suppose between thirty and forty, and two fine looking boys, the one about twelve, the other I should judge two years younger, all one family, were taken captives in one of their horrid *sham* wars. To keep them from having the *sulks*, it seems it was promised them that they should all be sold in one lot; but the trader having met with a rich planter who wanted some hearty boy slaves, finding he could make the best bargain of them by selling them separate, had them all four at a distance from the rest:

soon afterwards a *conductor** came to drag the purchased children from their parents! As soon as they perceived this cruel separation was determined, the whole family ran into each other's arms, and embraced one another in such a manner as that they could scarcely be torn asunder. At length the boys were compelled to go to the destined place of their slavery, while the parents appeared like two creatures perfectly distracted with grief; for they had now lost their last miserable consolation through life, that they might only live and die together, though in a state of cruel slavery. But I saw another scene of the like sort that affected me more than either of the former.

Far. Well, well, to be sure it is most dreadful bad. I wonder that his Majesty does not put it down, for they say, (God bless him!) he is as good a sort of a gentleman in himself as ever lived, and that he loves to make every one happy that is about him. It comes to my mind, that when your honour goes to London, could you but call on the Lord *Cancellor*, the good gentleman who gave our minister the living, and he was to go and tell the king *the rights of it*, he would soon put it down.

Loveg. (smiling) O but the king cannot act without the consent of his parliament, otherwise I dare say, had he his own will in this respect, he would make others as happy as himself.

Far. Aye, so I dare say, for they say he speaks *mighty good natur'dly* to every body, and that he diverts himself by doing something in our way. Now I like him wonderfully for that.

Wor. And so do I too, for I think it bespeaks a simplicity and goodness of disposition, which would be an ornament to the greatest monarch upon the

* The reader is desired to notice what soft expressions are invented to take the colour from the agents of this horrid traffic.

earth; and why should not a king divert himself as he likes best? I am sure a little farming is both innocent and instructive. Indeed I know not what his Majesty could better patronize, as the strength and wealth of the nation so much depends on it. Better be fond of the plough than the play-house.

Far. Why, but if our *parliament men* can put down these bad ways: I wonder they don't see to it.

Wor. Alas! as it happens, there is a deal of self-interestedness stands in the way.

Far. Well, I wish with all my heart your honour would but stand to be one of our *parliament men* for Mapleton. I am sure you would do all in your power to put it down. I remember there was a *main bustle* made against these wicked ways some time ago, but that did not *wind up* so well as it should.

Wor. Indeed if it was in my power to remove these evils, it would soon be done; but as it is a difficult thing to get into parliament with a clear conscience, through the drunkenness and wickedness which in general abound at the time of an election, I had rather spend my days in retirement; and do some little good among my neighbours in the country, than waste half my time in London in attending parliament. (*To Henry.*) But, Mr. Henry, we must see if we cannot muster up courage to hear your other story.

Hen. Oh, Sir, as I was looking on upon these miserable creatures, I saw a poor girl among the rest sobbing and crying in the deepest distress, and at last she quite fainted away. The captain ordered her to be carried off to a distance. A young man slave, who was standing by, was not less affected than herself; and he, it seems, was brought over from the same country about three years before. Seeing the young woman in that condition, he fell down at the feet of the man who had the care of her, and kissed

them several times, begging, as for his life, that he might go and speak to her. At length he was permitted. He ran to her with astonishing eagerness, embraced and kissed her several times, crying out, O my sister, Ora! O my dear sister, Ora! I was so affected by this scene, that I had it upon my mind sleeping and waking for several nights and days afterwards.

Mrs. Wor. Indeed, Mr. Henry, the story seems to have been too much for us all. I am sure it has been too much for me; but do you know what became of them afterwards?

Hen. Why, Madam, as soon as the captain's man, who had the care of the young woman, perceived that she and the young man were brother and sister, although inured to these scenes of misery, he could not help dropping a tear or two of compassion with the rest of us. After the girl was somewhat recovered, they were left to converse together. The farther particulars of this history I could not learn, but I'll warrant it was tragical enough. After this, however, the case was made known to the owner, when, according to the true spirit of the trade, lest the brother and sister should both of them *take the sulks*, so as to endanger their labour, or perhaps the loss of their lives by their mutual grief for each other, it was determined it should be contrived, if possible, that they might both live together on the same plantation. After some difficulty, it seems this was accomplished, and when they were informed of this event, to see how they leapt for joy, how they embraced and kissed each other, while they went along arm in arm to the plantation which was to be the destined place of their labour, was not a less affecting scene than the former.

Loveg. But, oh, what must the parents of these two affectionate creatures have felt on the loss of

such children! (*To Mr. Worthy.*) What should you and I feel, Sir, if we were to be bereaved of our children in such an unmerciful manner?

Wor. O it is too much to be thought of. (*To Henry.*) Indeed, Mr. Henry, I think you must discontinue your stories, for Mrs. Worthy seems more affected than myself, and my poor daughter is more overcome than either of us; and as to Mr. Lovegood, you see how much he feels on the subject, though as yet you have given us nothing of the history of poor Sancho, which you say, is as affecting as any of the former. I think for the present we have heard as much as we can bear, and that the rest of it must be deferred till another opportunity.

Hen. It is not only very affecting, but equally as improving; for he told me a lovely story of his conversion to the knowledge and grace of the gospel by the Moravian Missionaries.

Mrs. Wor. What can be the excuse for such disgraceful and abominable cruelties against our fellow creatures?

Hen. Why, madam we have been frequently told by some that they are scarcely to be esteemed as our fellow creatures, but a species of beings considerably below us.

Wor. (*fired with holy indignation.*) Is it possible to admit such a thought for a moment? Can they be worse bruits naturally than ourselves? What a dishonour in us to carry on such an abominable traffic, and for others to attempt to vindicate, or even to palliate it, when every principle belonging to it is founded upon incurable injustice! For it appears to me, admitting their argument for the moment, if it can be proved that their natural understandings are in a small degree inferior to our own, are we from thence to infer that we have a right to

set them at variance among themselves, that we may kidnap, rob, and murder, as we like best? and are we to set the example to all Europe, by being the first and principal transgressors, that we may avail ourselves annually of more than twenty thousand slaves for the sake of our luxuries; and destroy or enslave at least double that number of our fellow creatures, considering the multitudes we are obliged to murder by sham wars, in order that we may procure them, and consequently draw down by our infamous example the same evil on as many more besides? Will reason or conscience for a moment submit to it, when the only pretext which can be given is, that we suppose their understandings are inferior to ours? If so, why not pity and protect them till better instructed? But *cowards* alone take the advantage of *fools*, supposing the poor Africans to be such. What then shall we call ourselves, *Christians* or *devils*? and can a race of *devils* act worse against us than we do against them? And, as they have exactly the same right, if they had equal power, to plunder us as we have plundered them, how should we bear it, if a fleet of their ships should hover round our shores like a set of vultures after their prey? Would not every principle of self-interested indignation be roused in us? If then it be admitted that their understandings be weaker than ours, yet I am sure of this, that in art and wickedness, as it relates both to our principle and practice towards them, we abundantly exceed them.

Far. Well, I wish with all my heart, our 'squire was in the *thickest* of them, he would give it them *roundly*.

Mrs. Lit. Patty, my child, ring the bell.

Miss Polly. No, mother, Patty and Nancy are going out themselves to bring it in.

[Miss Patty and Miss Nancy went out immediately, and, by way of keeping up an old hospitable custom, speedily returned, Miss Nancy with a heaped plate-full of cake, cut in slices, and Miss Patty with a large waiter, with glasses of wine already poured out.]

Mrs. Lit. (*To Mr. and Mrs. Worthy*) Madam, I hope you and the 'squire will be so kind as to drink a glass of wine, and eat a bit of cake, after your tea.

Mrs. Wor. No, I thank you, Mrs. Littleworth we seldom take any thing after tea till supper time.

Far. I hope your *honour* and *madam* will be free, and taste a little of the cake that my wife and daughters have been making, and drink a glass of wine. It is *outlandish* wine, the same as your honour drinks at the hall. My son went for it to Mr. Vinter's of the George.

Wor. Well, Mr. Littleworth, for once I shall have no objection to taste your wine; and as my wife and daughter have been so much affected at the stories Mr. Henry has been telling us, I hope they will follow my example.

[As the fashion of drinking health was not yet banished from Grace-hill farm, Mr. Worthy drank the family of the Littleworths, then sipped his glass again, and drank his Majesty's good health. On which the farmer observed, in his younger days how his father directed him to drink the Pretender's good health, but that now he could drink his Majesty's good health, with all his heart. The same glass served to drink success to farming, and the last sip served for another toast.—A speedy abolition of the Slave Trade. Mr. Worthy was the toast-master, in which Mr. Lovegood heartily joined him, and thus ended the ceremony of the cake and wine.]

Loveg. Well, but Mr. Henry, as it is agreed that

all your stories will be too much for us at the present, and as we must hear about poor Sancho and his brethren, may I request the favour that the next time this company meet it may be at the vicarage, some Wednesday before the lecture; (*to Mr. Worthy*) but I am afraid, Sir, we shall not have that pleasure, for above a fortnight or three weeks, as I hear you are going to take Mrs. Worthy to see her relations in Lancashire.

Wor. Directly as we return, I am sure, we shall be all very happy to come and see you, when we shall hope, not only for some profitable conversation about poor Sancho, but a good sermon in the bargain. But shall we not interrupt you, Sir, in your meditations on that evening?

Loveg. O no, Sir; I hope I shall be prepared to talk to the poor people who attend our lecture before you come. Besides, such sort of conversation as we shall then have, I am sure will be no impediment to the sermon; and, by such a kind visit, you will confer a favour on Mrs. Lovegood, who from her attention to her family concerns, is so much confined at home.

Wor. (to Mr. Lovegood) Having now settled these matters, we can allow you sufficient scope of time for the Bible, a little singing and prayer.

Far. Aye, and what a mercy it is when God sends ministers that know how to pray. I well remember, when I was first awakened to a sense of my evil state, as how when our rector, Mr. Dolittle, came, as he thought, to set me right again, when I asked him if he would take the Bible and expound a chapter and go to prayer, poor gentleman, how he jumped about like a parched pea in a frying pan. What a pity it is when the neglectful and blind are sent by blind men to lead the blind.

[Miss Nancy directly took the hint—ran out im-

mediately and brought in her father's large Bible out of the kitchen, placed it before Mr. Lovegood, and snuffed the candles.]

Far. Why, Nancy, my dear, you should not have brought in *that* Bible. (*To Mr. Lovegood*) Why, Sir, I should be quite ashamed if you were to see what marks and notes I have made in it while I sat reading in the kitchen by the fire side.

Loveg. Never mind that, my friend. I always love to see a marked Bible; it is, in my opinion, a good evidence that our Bibles do us good, if we can mark and note them while we read them: you know that we pray that we may "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the blessed word of life.

Far. Amen, I pray God we may. But, with your leave, Sir, I had rather you would read out of another. (*To his wife*) Dame, will you send for that nice fine Bible, with the pictures in it, which your aunt left you as a legacy. It never can be made a better use of than on the present occasion.

[The fine best Bible was accordingly fetched down out of the curious old chest, or cabinet, in which it was imprisoned, while Mr. Lovegood said, that he wished it might be as much marked and noted as was the other; observing at the same time, that it was from the kitchen Bible the people got the most good. Mr. Lovegood, however, having been much affected, begged leave first to walk out for a few minutes into the garden, on which occasion, being a man of a very fruitful and a retentive mind, he composed a hymn, which afterwards was sung at the family service. And now Mr. Lovegood, "like a workman that needeth not be ashamed," opened the precious word of life. The chapter he chose was the 12th of the Romans. He dropped some very pertinent observations while he read the chapter, but his attention seemed peculiarly arrested by the following

words: "Let love be without dissimulation; abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good; be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." Then he quoted from St. John "God is love;" and dropped some very wise and rich remarks, how God, our God in Christ, being love, needed no other happiness than what he possessed in his own infinitely lovely existence; and that we were proportionably happy in the enjoyment of our existence also, as we existed in him. He observed that the highest indulgence to a gracious mind was to confer that happiness on others, in loving them and doing them good, as through the pardoning love of Christ such infinite good had been done to us by our regeneration and conversion to him. That self-love was the natural principle on which all mankind acted in their fallen state; that the grace of the Holy Spirit was communicated to crucify and mortify this *hellish* principle in man, and to implant in him another principle perfectly supernatural, a most solemn and sacred love to God for his own sake, and a most merciful and tender love to man for God's sake. He strongly remarked how contrary a spirit of tyranny and oppression was to the spirit of Christianity; that sin turned *men* into *monsters*, rendered them "implacable, unmerciful, and without natural affection;" that the grace of the gospel on the contrary turns *monsters* into *men*, not only directing them to be loving, gentle, and merciful among themselves, "in distributing to the necessities of the saints, and in being given to hospitality;" but constraining them to go beyond all this, even "to bless our very persecutors while we could recompense to no man evil for evil; but, if possible, as much as in us lay, to live peaceably with all men;" therefore the Christian, instead of avenging himself, chose rather "to give place

unto wrath." If therefore even "his very enemy hungered, he would feed him, if he thirsted he would give him drink;" thus instead of being overcome of evil, he was directed like, his Lord and Master "to overcome evil with good." Thus he went on with the chapter, impressing the same tempers and graces on the family as were then before them in the Bible. He then observed how the reverse of all this was exemplified in the horrid business of the slave trade; that the whole of its establishment was founded on the "mammon of unrighteousness," on a selfish love of the world; and that the result of this infernal traffic could not be otherwise than what it really was, a regular system of wholesale licensed thievery and murder; that instead of supposing the principles of Christianity could for a moment allow such a hellish commerce in human blood, directly as we are made by the *power* of the gospel what we should be by the *letter* of the law, we are blessed with the spirit of universal love. We are meek, merciful, loving, "pure in heart,"—"blameless and harmless, the sons of God." The furious lion is softened into the lamb, and all that is venomous and evil, as in the serpent kind, is powerfully extracted from our natures by "the blood of the everlasting covenant," whereby we "draw near to God," and are constrained to live to his glory.

Next he dropped some delicate hints on the blessedness of this religion, as it brought down such happiness into families, by making them experience a little heaven in themselves and their houses. The Farmer, Henry, and Miss Nancy felt the application, for they could "set to their seal that God was true," in the glorious influences of the power of converting grace upon their own hearts.

After the chapter had been thus read and expounded, the following hymn, just before, com-

posed by Mr. Lovegood, was given out, and Thomas Newman *pitched* the tune :

Now let the efforts of our praise
Arise to him who reigns above ;
In whose essential holiness
Dwells the eternal flame of love.

Jesus, our God, thy love we sing,
Unknown to sinners of our race,
Till thy compassion brought thee down
To save us by thy wond'rous grace.

Then what is heav'n but as we find
In thee is all we wish to be ;
And what is hell in man, dear Lord,
But as he is devoid of thee ?

Then where is heav'n but in the soul,
Who dwells in thee supremely bless'd,
And where is hell but on the shore
Where mercy finds no peaceful rest ?

Soon may this love and mercy reach
The swarthy tribes of Afric's shore ;
Those slaves of sin thou canst set free,
And bid them go and sin no more.

We blush with holy shame that men
Who bear thy sacred name, our God,
Should dare one single man enslave,
Or shed one drop of human blood.

Kindle the flame of love divine
In some kind heralds of thy grace ;
And bid each distant clime receive
The gladsome news of heavenly peace !

After the hymn, Mr. Lovegood offered up a very appropriate prayer, first for themselves and the family, blessing God for the grace already given, and praying for further vouchsafements where still needed for the rest of the company then present ; for the

people of his ministerial charge ; for the further spread of the gospel ; for the king and government ; and for those objects of human woe who had been made the subject of their conversation.—Soon after this the company withdrew ; and if the reader be not tired in reading, he must exercise his patience in waiting the return of Mrs. Worthy from Lancashire, before the subject of the slave trade be reassumed in another dialogue, and then concluded. In the interval, however, the reader will find in the two next dialogues a more minute account of the family of the Littleworths than was at first designed.

DIALOGUE XI.

THE HISTORY OF THE FAMILY OF THE LITTLEWORTHS,
WITH THE CHARACTER OF RECTOR FILLPOT, AND
MR. MEEK, HIS WELSH CURATE.

THERE lived in the town of Ruckford, about fifteen miles from Mapleton, a Mr. Nathaniel Steadyman, who had united himself to Farmer Littleworth's family by marrying his younger sister. His occupation was that of a Currier, in which line he did a considerable deal of business, and was in general esteem among his neighbours for his candour and integrity.

The family of the Littleworths, however, were unfortunately educated. In point of religion they were tutored in all the high church notions of the day; so that the least deviation from the established church, was, in their esteem, more to be dreaded than a thousand deviations from the common rules of morality; insomuch, that even cursing and swearing was a much smaller offence than attending a *conventicle*, and scarcely any offence at all, provided people exercised their profane talents against the Dissenters. Report also says, that old Mr. Simon Littleworth, with all his family, used to drink the Pretender's health after dinner, and that it was well he did not lose his life in the rebellion in the year 1745, for entertaining and encouraging the rebel army when in the North, against the present family upon the throne, by whom our civil and religious

liberties were established.¹ Mr. Simon Littleworth, the father of the present Farmer Littleworth, loved getting money to his heart, but could not bear to spend it, even on a decent education for his children. He died about the year 1776, leaving a fortune among his children of about three hundred and fifty pounds each, entailing also upon them all the prejudices of an unhappy day and generation, conceiving higher notions of the religion of Dr. Sacheverell * than of that of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

According therefore to all probable circumstances, Farmer Littleworth would never have submitted to have heard the gospel, if he had not first heard it in a church. But the farmer, though still a churchman, was now happily delivered from the trammels of his former education, and began to entertain equal love to Christians of all denominations: yet not so the rest of the family, which now consisted only of himself, and two *sisters; his elder brother and a sister having been dead some years ago.

His elder sister, Polly, was the exact counterpart of Miss Polly, to whom she stood godmother. She was, in her younger days, so self-willed and perverse, that no person could ever venture to ask her the question, if she chose to alter her state; which also, by general report, will probably be the fate of the god-daughter, as well as the aunt.

The farmer's sister continued to live in the neighbourhood of Mapleton till she was near sixty; but on

* Dr. Sacheverell was the high church champion in the days of Queen Anne. He was impeached by the commons for his seditious high church principles; his sermon was ordered to be burnt, while he himself was suspended from his ministry for three years.

account of the pressure of the times, has lately removed further north, to make a joint purse with another old maiden lady, known by the name of Madam Vixen. And though she was Miss Polly all the time she continued near her brother, yet since her remove she has submitted, though with some regret, to the graver appellation of Mrs. Mary.

Thus convenience has brought those two old ladies together; though they are the frequent cause of vexation to each other, yet hereby they are just able to keep a maid servant between them, who is generally changed about six times in the year.

Madam Vixen is often accustomed to boast that she had a superior education; and therefore attempts to correct Mrs. Mary for her vulgarity of expression; and also that her family was of much *better blood* than the family of the Littleworths. This is a frequent cause of mortification to Mrs. Mary, who plies her in return for her family pride and self conceit. Thus alternately they irritate and vex each other, till they make themselves so peevish and fretful thereby, that they scarcely exchange a word for several days together. During these intervals of ill humour, there are frequent threats of separation, till these little *fracas* are settled by the neighbouring gossips bringing them some new tales of the affairs of the neighbourhood, which they delight to hear, retail, and exaggerate. Then an *innocent* game at cards again sets them a quarrelling, and makes them *guilty* of the same sort of conduct against each other. Thus they *rub on* together from time to time: yet, if their dispositions are dissimilar in some instances, in others they are perfectly alike.

In point of religion they are precisely agreed ; for, though they seldom trouble the church but when the weather is very fine, yet they *do their duty* in reading the Psalms and Lessons at home : while two or three times a year they submit to the penance of a gloomy week of preparation before they receive the holy sacrament ; which is seldom done unless on the great festivals. But in nothing are they more similar than in their belief of various signs, and omens, and prognostications ; on which they are ever exercising their minds, and tormenting each other, under the expectation of the most gloomy events. The prognostications of Moore's almanack are always received and read by them with prodigious avidity and glee ; and though they are aware that the first Francis Moore, the original physician and *astrologer*, must long ago have been dead ; yet they have no doubt but that the present Francis Moore is as much a real character, and a far wiser *astrologer* than his father ; he being also the seventh son of his father, who was himself a seventh son. How far it was done with a design to impose on the credulity of the old ladies might be difficult to say ; yet they seem fully persuaded that the present Francis Moore has also a seventh son, who, though but young, is now studying both physic and *astrology* in the town of *Utopia*, in the north of Ireland ; and they have no doubt but that he is born to possess so supreme a degree of knowledge, by investigating the configurations of the stars, that he will be able to read the history of all future events beforehand, both private and public, as plainly as he can now read his A, B, C ; and that he will as far outshine those *great luminaries*, Count Swedenburgh, Mr. Brothers, and some other prophesiers on our late public events, as the vast

Knowledge of a Newton outshines the intellectual powers of a goose*.

Mrs. Mary, it seems, some years ago, in one of her superstitious fits, and wishing for some foresight as it respected herself, sent a guinea to the astrologer that he might-cast her nativity; and the prognostication was, that she was to be married to a surgeon. Through this unfortunate circumstance, she set her cap at every surgeon and apothecary for miles round the neighbourhood. She once went so far as to feign herself sick, that she might have an excuse to send for one of the gentlemen of the faculty: and though she gave him to understand how matters had been predicted respecting her future life; yet, alas! such was the Doctor's incredulity, that notwithstanding the prognostication, he could not believe that he was to be the man.

No one can wonder that these ladies, who are so fond of hearing and telling "Old wives fables," and of attending to such absurdities, should also give way to all sorts of fears and apprehensions arising from other causes the most superstitious and absurd. Hence it is that they are kept in perpetual alarm; at one time by the death-watch, at another time by the croaking of a raven, or the screeching of an owl; then again by the winding-sheet in the candle, and a variety of such other absurdities; as though the all-wise God had given a commission to

* Nothing can equal the sad disaster that must have attended the prognostications of this famous astrologer in the esteem of his admirers, in his political predictions on the two last years. On the year 1802 the predictions were all for bloodshed and war; and when war returned, for 1803, all his prophecies ran in favour of peace. In some former editions, these prophecies were presented to the reader more at large; but a page filled with such silly prognostications would as soon get out of date as the almanacks themselves.

spiders*, owls, and ravens, and even to tallow candles, to instruct mankind in the knowledge of different future events.

This unfortunate turn of mind, however, had once proved nearly fatal, not only to the comfort, but the very life of Madam Vixen. She heard, three or four times, her chamber-bell ring, as it was supposed, of its own accord. This brought to her recollection the story of her grandmother's death, which was foretold by some such event three weeks before the time. She therefore positively concluded that within that period she was to depart. This so worked upon her imagination as to bring on a serious illness. The apothecary was sent for only out of form, as she concluded it could be of no avail; the lawyer attended to alter and finish her will; and the poor clergyman, though as ill liked as the rest of his brethren, was sent for to prepare her for her change, and to fit her for the final reception of the holy sacrament; which it was her design to have received a day or two before her departure, which seemed for a while more fully confirmed by another event *dreadfully* similar to the former. Madam Vixen and her nurse one night evidently heard a bell ring, as though it had been from under the ground; but the fears excited

* Some naturalists are of opinion that the death-watch is not the spider, but another much smaller insect, found in the wood of old houses.

Then tell all your grannies it is a wood worm,
 That lies in old wood like a hare in her form;
 With teeth or with claws it will bite or will scratch,
 And chamber-maids christen this worm a death-watch;
 Because like a watch, it always cries click,
 Then woe be to those in the house who are sick;
 For sure as a gun they will give up the ghost,
 If the maggot cries click, when it scratches the post;
 As soon as they hear it, it shortens their breath,
 And they speedily die—because frighten'd to death.

on this account were soon dispersed, as it was only a piece of Mrs. Mary's prudent attention, who muffled the hammer of the bell belonging to the clock, as its shrill sounding noise was found offensive to Mrs. Vixen: and a little while after this the whole of this supposed melancholy event disclosed itself: for one night, while the nurse was sitting up, hearkening after death watches, screech owls, &c. and feeding upon these strange fears, the kitten stole into the room, (for both the old ladies are very fond of cats,) and after the manner of that frisky generation, Puss fixed her eyes upon her old plaything, the tassel of the bell, and consequently gave it a handsome ring. Mrs. Vixen takes the alarm, and asks if the bell did not again ring of itself? The nurse bursts out with laughing, and adds, —“ Why, Madam, it is nothing but the cat playing with the bell-tassel, and I dare say this was the reason why it rang before.” However, the ringing of the bell brought Mrs. Mary into the room, who, when she heard of the event, joined with the nurse in a laugh on the occasion; while Mrs. Vixen immediately took heart, and consequently began directly to recover. The nurse told the apothecary on his next day's visit, that the cat had done more for her mistress's recovery, by ringing the bell, than he could do with all the drugs in his shop. She then told him the whole of the story, which before was known only to the family. A message also was soon afterwards sent to the minister, that he might be informed, a repetition of his visits would not be needed; and the lady herself soon recovered, on the removal of the causes of her disease.

The reader may suppose that he would not have been presented with a detail of these little events, had it not been with a design to expose the folly of those superstitious fears which are so very injurious to the minds of all who have not sufficient sense

and resolution to resist them. Where there is but little real religion, the want of it is too frequently supplied by an abundance of superstition. The human mind is prone to run into extremes on every occasion : some are for believing too much, others for believing too little. Happy are they who, being blessed with "that wisdom which is from above," are preserved in the middle path, and saved from every extreme.

But to return from this digression. Mrs. Steadyman was in some respects of a better mind than her sister : she was of a more conversable and friendly disposition, which she could exercise pretty freely among her neighbours, though but very sparingly to her husband ; who originally being but a poor, though very industrious apprentice, found it a *convenient match*. Thus by marrying a *fortune*, he had the *misfortune* to be married to one who conceived she had a right to "dictate and usurp authority over the husband*," or, according to the delicate style of the day, *to were the small clothes*. This, in point of civility, was to be submitted to, at least during the honey-moon ; but, to the sad discomfiture of Mr. Steadyman, she had contrived to wear them from that time to this.

Notwithstanding some little offence had been given to Mr. Steadyman's family by the Farmer having shown a dislike, (they being on a visit soon after he became serious,) to the introduction of cards and such sort of *innocent amusements*†, they felt themselves under the obligation, from their family connexion, to repeat their visit upon their nephew Henry's unexpected return, and it was about ten

* Such should have been the correct translation of Timothy, ch. vi. and if any good woman of the same temper with Mrs. Steadyman should doubt the justice of my criticism, I readily refer them to others who understand Greek better than myself.

† See Dialogue the IVth.

days after Mr. Worthy's visit to Gracehill Farm, that this interview took place.

On the Saturday evening they arrived; as Mr. Steadyman could on the Sunday be best spared from his business. The author is not acquainted with the conversation, as it passed at supper; but what afterwards took place when the table was cleared, he has collected to the best of his power.

[*Thomas Newman is introduced.*]

Thomas. Master, you was saying you might like to take the covered cart to Brookfield church to-morrow, as the weather is inclining to be wet; if so, I should be glad to get things ready before I go home.

Farmer. I cannot tell as yet, Thomas. (*To Mrs. Steadyman.*) Sister, would you like to go with us to Brookfield church? It is hardly two miles from our house, and Mr. Lovegood is a charming man.

Mrs. Steadyman. O no, brother, I did not come here to *change my religion*; wherever I go, I always think it best to keep to the parish church. I shall go with sister Littleworth to Mapleton, to hear Mr. Dolittle.

Mr. Steadyman. Well, brother Littleworth, I'll go with you, for I cannot see that your notions of religion have done you any harm; and I must confess my nephew Henry is wonderfully reformed; but you need not have the cart for me, I had rather walk.

Miss Polly. If my aunt Steadyman won't go, I am sure Patty and I sha'nt. I have no notion to go and be crowded, and pushed about at that church, when we can sit so comfortably at our own.

Miss Nancy. I don't see, father, that you need to have the cart, if my aunt won't go; you and brother Harry may ride as usual, and I can walk with

my uncle, and shew him the nearest way over the fields.

Hen. Well, I wish, with all my heart, my aunt would but for once come with uncle; who knows what a blessing might attend it!

Mrs. Steady. There,—that was the way of talk last time we were here, as though nobody had any religion, unless they were all of one way of thinking.

Far. Well then, Thomas, we won't have the cart unless it should rain. Harry and I shall ride as usual, and Nancy and brother will walk. But have you had your supper?

Tho. Yes, master, my mistress has been in the pantry, and cut me off a great heaped plate-full of victuals to take home with me. It will make a rare feast for Betty and the children, with a few boiled potatoes. (*To his Mistress.*) Thank you, madam, a thousand times. (*Thomas retires.*)

Mrs. Littleworth. (*to Mr. Steadyman.*) I am not so much against my husband's religion as I was, for it has made that poor man an excellent servant; and Henry and Nancy are good children: and though I don't like to leave my parish church, yet I believe Mr. Lovegood is a very good man.

Mr. Steady. Well, and about six miles from our town there is a Mr. Meek, who serves two churches, who is of the same *way of thinking*; and oftentimes have I heard him run down; but for what I cannot tell, unless it be because he is a better man than most of his neighbours.

Mrs. Steady. Why don't you know that his rector threatened to turn him off his curacies the other day, because so many people come out of other parishes to hear him, and that he went to the bishop about him?

Mr. Steady. Well, and much good he got by that.

How could any one think that the bishop should turn a poor man off his curacies for having a full church. I am sure, if the bishop was to turn off all the parsons that have empty churches, he would have enough to do.

Far. Aye; but, brother, you have only got hold of half the story: for it has been said when Rector Fillpot, who is some great cathedral man, (and every one knows he loves his bottle better than his Bible,) went to the bishop to make it out as though his curate did wrong to have such a full church, he directly said he was heartily glad of it, and wished that every other parson's church was as full. And when Rector Fillpot asked my Lord Bishop what must be done if all the people left their churches to go after these sort of preachers? he said *as how* they must out-live and out-preach such men as Mr. Meek, and that was the way to bring them back again. Rector Fillpot must have found it a desperate hard thing to *quilt* all that; but, to my way of thinking, this was all a *shim sham job*; for the rector knows he never could have got another such a curate in his own way, to serve two churches, at the distance of between three and four miles from each other, and throughout all the summer months to serve each of these churches twice a day, for forty pounds a year. Now you know, brother, I am a farmer, and Mr. Meek must have a horse: for he cannot ride through the air like a *witch on a broomstick*, and that would cost him, to buy it and keep it, near upon twenty pounds out of the forty.

Mr. Steadym. Poor gentleman! I have often wondered how he could contrive to live upon so little; and he generally looks more decent in his clothing than one would expect; but he is much beloved, and I am told that many of his neighbours help him out.

Par. Aye, and so they need; and I am told also that our 'Squire gave him a new suit of clothes, from *top to toe*, last Christmas; and that he looked as well dressed of a Sunday as the rector himself, though he never could look so *plump*. According to his way of living, I wonder how he does, with his small income, to *keep body and soul together*; but it is a *burning shame* that other people should keep Rector Fillpot's curate for him, or let him be half starved, poor gentleman!

Mrs. Steadym. I dare say the rector would give him more if he was of his *own way of thinking*; but he is displeased with him on account of his religion.

Par. Ah, sister, this is a *sorry* excuse. You make but a poor hand of it, in *lifting the lame dog over the style*; but, to my mind, that man has found out the best way of *thinking*, who has found out the best way of *living*. Well, well, when we were all honoured to drink tea at our 'Squire's the other day, my son Harry gave a terrible account of the slave trade; but sure I am, the slave trade in England is not ended, when such a man as Rector Fillpot can have so many places of preferment as to bring him in twelve hundred pounds a year, while his poor curate, that he had quite out of Wales, (for that he might come cheap,) should be worked so hard, and have not much more to feed himself than what he wants to feed his horse, which he must have to take him from church to church. And poor Mr. Meek now begins to be an old man. I am afraid these fat rectors don't love their curates half so well as I do my old horses.

Steadym. Indeed, brother, it is a sad thing to see those who are our teachers acting in such a manner. We always mind more what *a man does* than what *a man says*; and as to Rector Fillpot we never hear of his coming into our parts but about Easter, and

then every body trembles lest he should come to screw up his tythes still higher than he has done already ; and all that he does for it, perhaps, is to preach one sermon in each of his churches, and then they are sure to see no more of him till that time twelve months. But it seems they talk about making all these rectors reside on their own livings ; yet I can't see what good can come of that ; for till they send us better men, the more we know of this sort of ministers, the less we shall like them.

Far. Yes ; and when he comes into these parts, he always visits our rector, and gives us a sermon. In the days of my ignorance, how I used to admire him ! The last time he preached, it seems, he made a *main bustle* about the church, and fell aboard some parsons, (I'll warrant he was throwing some *scalers* at Mr. Lovegood,) who wanted to make themselves popular by being neglectful about their tythes ; and that it was the duty of the clergy to see after the *'moliments* of the church, (I think he called them,) and that it was the duty of the people to pay the parsons what they called their dues. Well, well ; if such a sort of religion will take a man to heaven, I am sure Rector Fillpot will sit far above St. Paul ; for every body knows, if he be neglectful of his *flock*, he is eager enough after the *fleece* ; and they say, of late he is got so fat that he can scarcely squeeze himself into the pulpit, because of his big belly, and his poor curate so thin, that he could almost creep into a mouse hole.

Mrs. Littlew. Aye, master, I remember what you say is very true. I was there to hear him, and I thought he had better been upon something else.

Far. Why, if such men as Rector Fillpot are to go to heaven, it is impossible to suppose that Demas, who loved this present evil world, should ever have been sent to hell. Why they think we *countrified*

plain folk are so ignorant, as that we don't know a good man from a bad one. But, dame, can you remember what was the text?

Mrs. Littlew. I remember it was a very short one; "The labourer is worthy of his hire."

Far. Why then, according to that doctrine, the curate, who did all the labour, should have all that the rector gets, and the rector all the curate gets; and I'll warrant this would soon bring down his fat belly for him.

Hen. Well, well, I must confess nothing hardened me in my wickekness like the conduct of such ministers. When I was going on in the most vile ways, and with the most wicked company, we could laugh at all religion, because it was preached by such sort of ministers as we knew had no more of it than ourselves.

Steadym. Indeed, Henry, I am as much ashamed of such men as you can be. If I had known Mr. Meek had been so good a man, I should have been glad now and then to help him out.

Mrs. Steadym. I shan't like that, Nathaniel, without your letting me know it. I am afraid you'll soon be of Brother's religion, and I sha'nt like that neither. I have no notion of chopping and changing about one's religion in this manner. You know that Mr. Dulman, our minister, when he thought you seemed that way inclined, and when he heard you was coming to see brother, came on purpose to advise you against all these new notions; for if we are all wrong now, what is become of our fathers and grandfathers, who went on in the same way as ourselves? But I don't see what business we have to find fault with the clergy.

Far. Well, well, sister, I shall never think of trusting the concerns of my precious soul to that man who takes no care of his own; but no man living, for

twenty miles round can love and honour those of the clergy whose lives properly *square* with their doctrines more than I do; but while we hear both in the Old Testament and the New, how the Lord declared his wrath against all the false prophets, and scribes, and pharisees, though we should pity and pray for them, yet I am sure we do wrong to be their followers. You know if the blind lead the blind, we shall all fall into the ditch together. But, brother, would you not like to have another glass of ale? [*To his wife.*] Dame, pour out sister another glass of currant wine before we put away the things, and then fetch the Bible, and let us go to prayer; it is best not to sit too long by the *drink*.

Mrs. Steadym. But, brother, may'nt we go up stairs and pray *to ourselves*, if we like that best?

Mr. Steadym. It is not so late but that we can stop a little while longer. [*Mrs. Steadym submits.*] The *marked Bible* is placed before the Farmer, who read the first part of our Lord's sermon upon the mount, Matthew v. and then said what good minds feel, and are naturally inclined to say, of the blessed state of those real Christians our Lord describes as thus blessed in him. And as it was the custom of the family, that when Henry read, the Farmer prayed, and when the Farmer read, Henry prayed, so Henry offered up a very suitable and affecting prayer. This so immediately attracted Mrs. Steadym's notice, that she was not a little surprised how well he could remember to *say his prayers* without book, and begged to know where the book was to be bought, out of which he had learnt his prayers. The Farmer made answer, that the prayers were written upon his son's heart by the pen of Doctor Experience. The family wished to retire, which prevented all further enquiries about Doctor Experience, though the com-

mon guest of every humble praying sinner's heart. The writer also, at a late hour in the evening, begins to find his own mind flag, and therefore wishes to conclude the present dialogue, that he may undertake another upon a more profitable and interesting subject, which took place on the Sunday evening after the family's return from Brookfield church.

DIALOGUE XII.

BETWEEN THE FAMILY OF THE LITTLE-
WORTHS AND MR. AND MRS. STEADYMAN.

A SUNDAY EVENING'S CONVERSATION UPON THE MERCIES
OF GOD IN THE JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION
OF THE UNGODLY.

THE Farmer, Henry, and Nancy, with Mr. Steadyman, not having sufficient time to return home between the services, carried their provision with them into Thomas Newman's house, and there partook of it. After the second service they returned, and supper being ended, the following conversation took place :

Steadyman. Well, sister Littleworth, I never spent such a Sunday as this before. [*To his wife.*] Mistress, I wish you had been with us. I never saw such a serious and devout congregation, and never heard such a sermon since I was born. And then we ate our dinners at Thomas Newman's house, the poor man that works for my brother. What a good man he is! and what a charming family he has got! I counted seven of them, and I think his wife is near her time again*; and what a wonderful prayer he

* It is now upwards of three years since the farmer became serious. This accounts for the addition of another child since that period (see Dialogue I.), and explains at the same time an odd report how the Farmer was overheard "talking to the devil behind the hedge." The fact was, the Farmer hearing that Thomas's wife had produced another child,

made before we all went again to church. We do not serve God in our parts any thing like as they do here. I never saw any thing like religion as I have seen it this day.

Mrs. Steadym. Why, Nathaniel, what can possess you to talk about religion in this manner? Well, if I did not always suspect what would become of this visit, as well as Mr. Dulman.

Mrs. Littlew. I let my husband go his way, and I go mine; and I find I am quite as happy since he has *taken* to religion as ever we were before.

Steadym. Well, never did I hear any minister from the beginning to the end lay open the Bible in a manner like him. I am sure I should never stay at home if I could hear at Ruckford a minister like Mr. Lovegood. If I can I think I shall go to hear poor Mr. Meek, the Welshman, for he is supposed to be the most like him of any man in our parts. But O how he explained, as he called it, the way of salvation for ruined sinners by Jesus Christ! Though I have read so much of it in the Bible, and have heard so much about it, yet I wonder at myself, how I could be so ignorant what these things could mean.

Hen. Why, to be sure, he preached us two excellent sermons, but to me it appears as though every sermon he preached was better and better. O what a blessing we have in that most dear man of God! and what a mercy it would be, if in every parish there were such ministers to instruct the ig-

went to their house, and gave the family half a crown. On his return he was overheard grumbling and muttering against himself for his covetousness, declaring that the devil his old master should not have his ends. He therefore returned directly to Thomas's house, and said, "Thomas, this won't do, I must have my half crown again." Thomas not a little surprised at this unexpected demand, restored the gift, and the farmer put a seven shilling piece in the room of it, and it was in this way the farmer conversed with the devil behind the hedge.

norant. It is his very heart's delight to go about doing good to the souls of his people.

Steadym. I must confess, when I heard him in the desk, I liked him wonderfully, but in the pulpit, what a man he is! and with what love and affection he preaches! his heart seems to feel every word he says. But I rather wondered at his text, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." How wisely he explained it! I did not know there was such a text in all the Bible.

Hen. And did you not admire how he set forth the purity and holiness of God, both in his nature and in his law? That as he was infinitely holy in himself, so he must hate sin, whether committed by apostate men or angels, in an infinite degree; that we had not only to consider our outward actions before man, but the state of our hearts inwardly before God; that it was said, "Blessed are the pure in heart," for they, and they only, "shall see God."

Steadym. Why, I had always understood that if we were but just and honest before man, it was quite enough. How well he explained that text, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified!" that though we might be justified by our actions in the sight of man, yet that none of us could be justified in the sight of God, as his holy nature abhorred the inward sinfulness of our hearts.

Far. Ah, dear brother how glad I am to hear you talk after this fashion! Because I did not deserve to stand before the Justice for my wicked deeds. I thought I had righteousness enough to stand before the Lord himself. How could I suppose myself a Christian, while I thought no more about the salvation of my soul by Jesus

Christ, than the dead folk do in our church-yard at Mapleton.

Hen. But while he pointed out the nature of God, did you not mind, uncle, how he explained to us that every wicked sinner in a state of enmity against God, lived with a hell in his own heart, while he was "living without God in the world."

Steadym. Yes. And I remember he said, that every sinner was his own tormentor by his wickedness.

Hen. I suppose you mean that part of his sermon in which he was proving how every person who was tormented with anger, malice, or revenge, was a most cruel self-tormentor; and that covetousness shut up a man's heart not only against all mankind, but against himself, and that therefore he was a self-tormentor. These, he said, were a set of *devilish* self-tormentors. Then he talked of a set of *beastly* self-tormentors; and all that he said against these evil ways I have experienced to be true, most sadly to my own cost. In those days I should not have cared if I had broken my father's and my mother's hearts, if I could but have got their property to have spent it in my wicked projects. [*Henry is affected and weeps; the Farmer is also much affected, and adds,*]

Far. See, brother, how wonderfully the grace of God has changed the heart of my dear child! how different he is now to what he was before he went to sea! And you know what a poor, thoughtless, worldly-minded sinner I was before I took to go and hear Mr. Lovegood.

Steadym. Why, I confess, brother, I see something in religion that I never thought of before, and all that I have been hearing to-day seems to me to be so true, that there is no disputing against it.

Hen. Yes, uncle, and I was glad for your sake that you were there; for it appeared to me as clear

as the light, what Mr. Lovegood said of the law, that it was the revelation of the mind and will of an infinitely holy God among all his creatures; that therefore the least sin, in the least degree, must put us under the condemnation of that law; that if God could in any measure allow sin, or look over it upon account of our corruption, such sinful actions would be no longer unlawful actions, (and what a contradiction that would be) for "where there is no law there is no transgression."

Steadylym. Indeed, Mr. Henry, it appears to me that I might have gone all the days of my life to hear Mr. Dulman at Ruckford, and still continued as ignorant of the law as if I had been a downright heathen. Nay, as for my part, I do not know that I ever heard any thing further about the law than what a heathen may practise quite as well as a Christian. At one time we are told we must not get drunk; then that we must not curse and swear; then that we should pay our debts; and then that we must come to church and keep the sabbath. Now I had never any inclination to do otherwise between man and man; but we never hear any thing to the purpose how the heart of man should be before a pure and holy God.

Far. Aye, and just in the same way Mr. Dolittle used to "daub me over with his untempered mortar;" for though I was never so strict and moral, as you have been, brother Steadyman, yet as I kept pretty *tight* to my church, and used to act *good-naturedly* towards my neighbours, and as our parson used to say of me when he used to hear of me in my *tipsy fits*, I had a *good heart at bottom*, I thought if I had religion enough to please him, I need not concern myself about any thing further; especially as I thought he could do such wonderful things for me when I came to die, by the assistance of the holy sacrament and his absolution.

Hen. Ah! but uncle, such sort of notions will never make out what Mr. Lovegood said about the law from the word of God, how it is "the letter that killeth, and the ministration of death and of condemnation." If the law required nothing but outward sobriety and morality, I suppose you never transgressed it; and then the Bible is not true, that says "we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God," and that consequently "judgment is passed upon all men to condemnation".

Steadym. Why, I have no more a desire to make myself a beast by getting drunk, than I have a desire to go and lie to-night in brother's hog-stye: and as for outward integrity between man and man, I thought myself almost to be a little god upon that account; because people would say of me, that they would rather trust me upon my word, than believe many others upon their oath. But I did not quite understand what Mr. Lovegood meant by the law being "the ministration of death and of condemnation."

Hen. Why, you know, when any one commits a capital offence by transgressing the laws of his country, then the law administers condemnation and death to that man; and when he is given over to the executioner he loses his life by the letter of that law, and therefore it is "the letter that killeth." Now, you know, uncle, the first and great command is, that we "should love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and minds, and souls, and strength;" but our blinded consciences think little or nothing of living in the perpetual neglect of love to God; while we are much more alarmed, if we neglect those rules of morality we ought always to observe between man and man. Thus we live in entire neglect to the duties of the first table, that tell us what we should be before God, and think that all will be well if we keep up a little outward decency in attending to the

duties of the second table, which direct us how to act among our neighbours.

Steadym. But how Mr. Lovegood talked about the spirituality of the law, and what a holy frame of mind was needed before ever we could love God, and that we could practise nothing that was truly good before God unless we loved him. That it was impossible that any man could repent of sin till he hated it, and that sin never was hated till God was loved: and how plainly he made it out, that without this love to God we could never pray aright, believe aright, or do any thing aright.

Far. Ah, brother Steadyman, and so I found it with me directly as I took to go to Brookfield church; for though I had much more reason than ever you had to find fault with the *outward* wickedness of my actions, yet I now felt the worst of the evil lay in the *inward* wickedness of my heart; that as I knew nothing what it was to love God, so I had no heart nor inclination to do any thing that was good in his sight. Never till then could I say with Job, though so much more holy than any of us, "Behold, I am vile!" O what strange foolish creatures we must have been, in the midst of our wickedness to think that we were righteous, when God's word so plainly says, "There are none righteous, no not one."

Miss Nancy. Well, as for my part, I never thought whether my heart was either good or bad, or any thing about it, only I thought it was wrong to oppose people because they were desirous to be better than myself; but I never saw what a state I was in till I heard Mr. Lovegood preach upon that text out of the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done," and then I saw, as he explained it, I never did the will of the Lord in all my life-time, and that I never could do it so as to please God, till I had a new heart.

Steadym. A new heart ! aye, I heard Mr. Love-good make use of that expression.

Hen. Yes, and can't you remember what he said ? how that God never wrote his holy law but upon the tables of a new heart ; and that every sinner without a new heart was in a condemned and ruined state ; and that all we did in such a state was sin, because done from a sinful principle * ?

Steadym. Well, till this day I always thought I had as good a *chance* for heaven as any of my neighbours, but I never considered the state of my heart before God.

Far. Ah, brother, there is the *gripe*. When we think of our actions before man only, though now and then we get ourselves daubed and dirtied, yet we suppose by a little of the white-wash of morality we can soon cover all this. But when we look at the state of our hearts, how can we think of justifying ourselves before him ?

Steadym. Well, I shall never think I shall be able to justify myself before God any more. What the publican said I must say, " God be merciful to me a sinner ! "

Hen. How heartily glad I am, uncle, that you now understand it. " By the law," or by the knowledge of the law, " is the knowledge of sin ; " for this is the only way we can come by the knowledge of the glorious doctrine of salvation by Christ alone. And how wonderfully well our minister preached upon that subject in the afternoon.

Mrs. Littlew. Why, Patty, child, how you sit yawning ! What, are you going to sleep ?

Miss Patty. Why, is not going to church once or twice a Sunday religion enough for any body, without having so much of it over and over again after supper ?

* See Article the XIIIth,—Of Works before Justification.

Mrs. Littlew. Well, well, if you and Polly don't love to hear any more talk about these matters, you had better put away the things into the pantry, for we have all done supper. (*To the Farmer.*) Master, shall you want any more drink?

Far. Oh no, mistress, you may put it all away: but let us see (*The Farmer takes out his watch*), it is not above five minutes after nine by the town-hall clock at Mapleton; and if our poor daughters don't like our conversation, yet I think it will do brother Steadyman, and none of us any harm; if we sit up a little longer to talk about the good things we have been hearing this day at Brookfield church.

Steadym. I admire that your minister takes such different texts to preach from, to what Mr. Dulman, and such sort of ministers chuse to *head* their sermons with; and then when they have taken their text, we hear very little more of the Bible, but only about some moral duty we ought to perform, and against some evil practice that people ought to avoid. I never heard that text preached upon before, which Mr. Lovegood took this afternoon, "that God might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," and at first I could not conceive what he could make of it.

Far. Why it is the sum and substance of all the Bible.

Steadym. So I thought when he came to open it; what a deal of pains he takes to make the people understand the Bible.

Far. Whenever he has shewn us our *ruination* in ourselves, he is sure to tell us of our redemption in Christ.

Steadym. Well, I never thought of any Christ till to-day, but my own good works.

Mrs. Steadym. Why, Nathaniel, and what can you

have better than good works? There is nothing like them, I am sure; don't tell me: good works are better than all the faith in the world. I am afraid I shall be plagued to death by your new notions in religion, and I shall not like that; and if you take to go after *parson* Meek, you shan't be taking him a pocketful of money every time you go there. Don't you know that we have got a family?

Mrs. Littlem. Why, sister, I used to be very cross with my husband when I suspected that he gave away his money to Mr. Lovegood's followers; but, I don't know how it is, we have prospered more of late than ever.

Far. Ah, sister, we have all enough of this world; it would be well for us if we thought a little more of the next: but I remember the time when I used to keep up a *main bustle* about my good works, but it was when I did nothing but bad ones. Now I never thought of leading a new life till after God had given me a new heart, and we know that good faith will produce good fruits; but it will never do to turn religion *topsy turvey*.

Hen. Let me see; I think I put down something that Mr. Lovegood said this day on that subject, (*looking at his notes*) here it is, he brought these three texts, "Without faith it is impossible to please God."—"Faith worketh by love."—"Love is the fulfilling of the law." So that unless we are rooted and grounded in the faith of the gospel, we shall never bring forth any fruit unto God.

Steadym. Well, well, I now see I have been trusting upon the decency of a heathen, without the spirituality of a Christian. O, brother, what shall I do to be saved?

Far. Why did you not hear at church how "God could be just, while he was the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus?" Was it not worth while to go

a thousand miles to hear such a charming sermon, and so much of the precious love of Christ to such perishing sinners?

Steadym. I was so much affected while he explained to us the love of Christ in dying for our redemption, that I scarce knew where I was, it so overcame me.

Far. Dear brother, how thankful I am that ever you came with us this day to Brookfield church. How this brings to my mind when Thomas first persuaded me to go there, and Mr. Lovegood was then preaching upon these words, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon;" and a trimming sermon it was against me, and all my wicked ways, and desperately alarmed I was; but when he preached afterwards upon that text, "Christ died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;" how was my heart melted down under that sermon; I was all admiration how Christ could find it in his heart to save such a wicked wretch; and when poor Thomas saw me so affected, for till then I never dropped a tear about the state of my soul in all my life, he quite cried and sobbed (*Farmer drops a tear*;) but, brother, they were all tears of joy, because he thought the Lord was then saving my soul, and breaking my hard heart; and when Mr. Lovegood happened to look that way, and see what a state we were all in, he was as much affected as either of us. How he wept, and preached about the precious promises of the gospel! He was so overcome, that he could hardly go on; and as to myself, I had several times almost swooned away.

Steadym. Mr. Lovegood seemed very much affected this afternoon.

Far. I dare say he saw you affected; and it is amazing how glad at heart he is when he can but see such poor creatures as we all are melted down under

a sense of the love of Christ our Saviour to such vile sinners.

Hen. O, father, can't you remember the first night I came home, at family prayer, how we were all affected while he mentioned that text, what "joy there was in heaven over one sinner that repenteth !" What a time of love was that to all our-souls !

Nancy. Why Mr. Lovegood seemed to look very much our way, especially when he was explaining how the justice of God was glorified in the death of Christ, that the mercy of God might be also glorified in the salvation of sinners.

Steadym. What strange conceptions I have had about these things ! I used to suppose that nothing was required by Mr. Lovegood's followers, but that if they had faith in Christ, no matter what they were, or how they lived ; but now I begin to see if Christ does not pardon me by the shedding of his blood, I never can be pardoned ; and that my heart must be changed, or I shall be ruined for ever.

Hen. And when we come to compare not only our actions, but our hearts with God's law, " Who shall stand when he appeareth ?" But this does not remove our obligations to obey the law ; and it is from a sense of our obligations to obey it, because it is in itself holy, just, and good, that we are made to be ashamed that we have so transgressed it.

Far. O no, brother ; we can never " live in sin that grace may abound ;" for " how shall we who are dead unto sin live any longer therein ?"

Steadym. Why that used to puzzle me when I saw you and Harry and others, that were followers of Mr. Lovegood, so different in your way of living to what you were before. I always thought it very strange that such bad doctrines should teach people to live better lives. Mr. Dulman came on purpose to tell us a day or two before we came here, that

all the people about these parts were for free grace, that they might live as they list.

Hen. Much he understands what is meant by grace, when he talks in that manner ; for the Bible tells us, "sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the law, but under grace;" and that "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and godly and righteously in this present world;" for that we now "reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ."

Steadym. But I remember he contradicted himself the same evening, by saying, he had no notion of people being so over strict in their religion. I never went much by Mr. Dulman's religion ; for his father meant to bring him up to the law, but he soon found he had not sense enough for that, and therefore said he was only fit for a parson ; but I am sure I heard no such notions about grace at your church, and from what happened, not a long while since, he seems to me to have no idea at all of the meaning of the Bible ; for an old lady who was supposed to have some very odd notions in religion, because she now and then used to attend a little meeting in our town, left him a guinea to preach a funeral sermon, and she said what was to be the text ; let me see—there were some such words in it as these, "Not having on my own righteousness which is by the law." I recollect that much of it ; but I remember that some people in our town supposed there was no such text in all the Bible. Brother Littleworth, where is that text ? but I hope I shall mind my Bible more than I have done.

Far. Harry, my child, is it not in the Philip-
pians ?

Hen. (*Taking out his pocket Bible.*) Yes, father,

it is in the 3d chapter of the Philippians, and the whole text runs thus? "I count all things as dung that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Steadym. Well now, all that Mr. Lovegood has been saying, seems to me wonderfully to have explained that text: but poor Mr. Dulman could not make it out at any rate: it is said that he went over on purpose to Mr. Blindman, to know if he could borrow from him, or any other clergyman, a sermon on that text, and he supposed it was utterly impossible that a proper funeral sermon could be made on such a text.

Far. So I should suppose, according to his way of thinking, when every poor sinner is to be tossed up into heaven by the merit of his own righteousness. But, brother, what was the upshot?

Steadym. Why, when he came to preach the sermon, he plainly told the people that he could not understand why the old lady should chuse such a text that had puzzled all the divines round about the country; and that as in St. Paul's Epistles there were many things "hard to be understood," he would not himself be so presumptuous as to explain it; but that he would give us the best sermon he had on a funeral occasion.

Far. Ah! but If Mr. Lovegood had been to handle that subject, I'll warrant he would have given us a *rare* sermon upon it. But you know it is said, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Hen. Well, uncle, I hope that text will never puzzle you any more, as it has Mr. Dulman. But

as to the accusation, that such ministers have to make against Mr. Lovegood, as though what he preached gave people a licence to live in sin, I am sure in himself there is not a better man living; and he is never so happy as when all his hearers live after the same good example as we at all times have from him: but he did not leave us in the dark about this matter in his sermons this day. You know how highly he spoke of the purity, and excellency, and goodness of the law in the morning, and that as we were eternally bound to obey it, so it was most just and righteous in God to punish us for our transgressions; but then he did not tell us, that we were pardoned by the death of Christ, that we might *live* in sin, but that we might be *saved from* sin. And cannot you remember how he insisted on it in the afternoon, that every one redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ would have his heart renewed by the grace of the Holy Spirit; and you know, uncle, it is utterly impossible, when our hearts are thus made holy, that our lives should be unholy.

Steadym. Well, I confess I see things in a very different light from what I ever saw them before. How glad I should be if my business would let me stop over Wednesday, that I might hear Mr. Lovegood preach another sermon.

Nancy. Why, father, suppose you and uncle were to go down and talk to Mr. Lovegood to-morrow morning; I am sure he would be very glad to see you.

Far. Aye, that I am sure he would. I never shall forget in what a loving and kind way he first talked to me after I was convinced of my sinful state. Shall we go brother?

Steadym. I am quite a stranger to him. I should be ashamed to take such a liberty; besides, how I should expose my ignorance!

Far. Nay, but, brother, does any man keep from fire when he is cold, or from victuals when he is hungry? My son Harry can look after the workmen to-morrow, and you and I will ride down to Brookfield. I know from blessed experience how well our minister has been taught, like his blessed Master, "to shew compassion to the ignorant, and them that are out of the way."

Steadym. Well, brother, I'll think of it, and to-morrow morning at breakfast I'll let you know.

Mrs. Steadym. I say to-morrow morning too! I think we shall none of us be in bed till to-morrow morning, for at this rate we shall not have done talking about religion to-night.

Mrs. Littlew. Why, sister, though I cannot take in my husband's religion, yet I never got any good by thwarting him in this fashion. I must say it before both our masters, they have been very good husbands to us, as husbands in general now go.

Far. Well, well, dame, as sister is tired, and the girls have put away the things, let us have family prayer and go to bed.

On this occasion it was Henry's turn to read. He read the two chapters out of which the texts were taken, and afterwards the farmer went to prayer, but in the middle of his prayer, while he was offering up some humble supplications on behalf of his brother and sister, he was so overwhelmed by a holy anxiety for their salvation, and his speech was so interrupted by his tears, prayer was abruptly concluded; this, however, gave an opportunity for another act of devotion for the conclusion of the family service.

Mr. Lovegood having a poetic turn, was in the habit of composing a few verses of a hymn suitable to his subject, which the congregation sang after the

sermon, and which Henry Littleworth was accustomed to take down as Mr. Lovegood gave it out. It was therefore proposed that the hymn sung at church at the afternoon service should be repeated at evening family prayer, of which the following is a copy.

DEAR JESUS, we thy name adore,
Our holy Saviour and our King;
We own thy sov'reign love and pow'r,
And of thy great salvation sing.

And shall we then in sin proceed?
Ungrateful and rebellious prove?
Make all thy wounds afresh to bleed,
And thus requite thy dying love?

Forbid it, Lord! May ev'ry sôul
The hated thought at once disclaim;
The pow'r of sin thou canst controul,
No rival lust with thee shall reign.

Objects that once gave high delight,
Through grace, are now detested grown!
In vain forbidden joys invite,
Since now the vicious taste is gone.

Dead to ourselves, and dead to sin,
In Christ our better hopes revive;
Th' immortal pulse now beats within,
While, quicken'd by our God, we live.

Beams of celestial light descend
To renovate the carnal mind;
With wings full stretch'd to God we bend,
And leave this worthless world behind.

In free submission low we fall
Before our dear Redeemer's throne,
To him with joy devote our all,
And live and die to him alone.

On the morrow morning Mr. Steadyman was persuaded to make the visit to Mr. Lovegood. The

conversation was, we doubt not, edifying and good; but the reader is requested to wait till after the writer's next summer's excursion, when he hopes to call on Mr. Lovegood, that he may be able more correctly to state the substance of this interview.

The writer, however, has already obtained sufficient information of the knowledge of matters at Brookfield, so as to form a conjecture that it is not probable Mr. Steadyman can long attend the ministry of Mr. Duhman: and that though Mr. Meek is a man of a good and sound mind, yet not of great preaching ability; and also that he will find his church at too great a distance for his regular attendance, though not for his occasional visits: and that, therefore, when he became inquisitive after the truth of the gospel, he discovered there was in the same town a worthy dissenting minister, whom, in the days of his ignorance, he had overlooked; whose life was exemplary, and who had preached more of the doctrines of the church of England in his meeting in one sermon, than was to be heard in the church for seven years together; and there is no doubt, but when Mr. Lovegood hears this, though in himself from principle and conscience a minister of the established church, he will advise Mr. Steadyman to seek after the word of life wherever he can find it.

Mr. Lovegood is a man of enlarged and generous mind; knowing, therefore, that the mere reading of the church prayers, however excellent in themselves, is not the general mean of salvation, it is his opinion that a preached gospel should be principally sought for in every christian church or congregation.

The writer of these Dialogues also having, at an early stage of his ministry, in a measure been driven from out of that line of the sanctuary service in which Mr. Lovegood is called to labour, confesses that he

still retains his partiality for that service; but as he sees that a gracious God does not all his work in one line, and as he laments how much the members of different societies are cramped by their restrictive laws, he equally abhors that spirit of *schism** and separation set up by party against party, against the true church of Christ at large, which is so beautifully defined in one of our own church articles, as being "a congregation of faithful men in which the word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

* That this is the true import of the term "Schism" in the word of God, see an Essay on the subject in the *Evangelical Magazine*, for January, 1804.

DIALOGUE XIII.

BETWEEN MR. AND MRS. LOVEGOOD, MR. MRS.
AND MISS WORTHY, THE FARMER, HENRY,
AND MISS NANCY.

ON EVILS OF THE SLAVE TRADE, CONCLUDED.

AFTER the return of Mr. Worthy and family from Lancashire, the engagement with Mr. Lovegood was attended to. Though the pride of Miss Polly and Miss Patty was considerably gratified by their visit at Mr. Worthy's, yet as Mr. and Mrs. Lovegood were constrained to live in a more humble style, they were glad of some frivolous family excuse to stay at home. Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Worthy, the Farmer, Henry, and Nancy, were the whole of the party.

For the sake of brevity the tea table conversation is omitted; one circumstance alone shall be recorded. Mr. Lovegood's vicarage was by no means lucrative, and though he had a wife whose fortune did not annually produce above thirty pounds, and there were four children to be maintained from this small pittance, still it was far from his disposition to extort from his parishioners the utmost penny he could demand by law, knowing well the infinite injury that is done to the cause of religion by such a mercenary conduct, in so many of the clerical order; yet he still received much more than an equivalent from the hands of those who knew his worth. Many had experienced that the best of consequences had been the happy result of his ministry among them. A temperature of conduct, had, by the grace of

God, directed them to be frugal in their personal indulgences, that they might be liberal to the necessities of others. Such naturally became the real friends of Mr. Lovegood; and thus, while his heart was at all times too tender to receive even his accustomed dues from the hard hand of honest industry, while he has been frequently known rather to give than receive, yet others, knowing that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," brought forward their free will offerings in kind abundance. In the list of such contributors, the name of Farmer Littleworth was registered in course. On his arrival, therefore, from Gracehill Farm, the Farmer pulled out a pound of tea from his great coat pocket, while Miss Nancy took into the pantry a pan of butter salted down for the winter's service of the family; which presents were the more thankfully received, as it was by the particular wish of Mrs. Littleworth, she having now sufficient evidence that these little tokens of benevolence, were no burden to the family, compared to the extravagance which was among them, when they were all living "without God in the world."

[Dolly, Mr. Lovegood's maid, the only servant they could afford to keep, having cleared the tea table, the conversation was thus resumed.]

Farmer. How glad we all were to hear the bells ring so charmingly, and to see the chimnies smoke so rarely at the hall, on your honour's return last Saturday!

Worthy. Why, Mr. Littleworth, we stopped somewhat shorter than we designed; for, last Sunday, when we were at Welford church we found ourselves quite out of our element; the minister seemed to be taking a deal of pains to make out how the *secret* influences of the Holy Spirit, which he seemed not altogether to deny, were still *imperceptible*.

Far. Las, Sir, what things these *larned* clergy will say ! I remember once when I had a *main bout* with Mr. Dolittle on that head. But how can we know or have any perceptions about things that are imperceptible. (*To Mr. Lovegood*) A'in't I right, Sir, in my poor notions on that head ?

Loveg. Why, it appears to me, the best evidence you can have that you are right in that point, will arise from your own experience ; and, in this respect, blessed be God for the change which has been wrought upon your mind, and that is the best evidence to you that religion is not *imperceptible*. But let us charitably suppose, that the ministers who make such remarks, are unhappily mistaken respecting our interpretation of these glorious truths. They conceive that we are ever preaching up the necessity of feeling a set of wild visionary impulses upon the mind, whereby at one time we are precisely to know the moment we were convinced of sin, and then as precisely tell the moment by another impression, when we were pardoned. Now, while I am sorry for the just offence which has been given by too many who have submitted to such wild impulses of the imagination ; yet to urge the charge of enthusiasm promiscuously against those who can, according to the 17th article, seriously say, " They feel in themselves the workings of the spirit of Christ," or in other words, the spirit of purity and holiness, which must be *felt* in all who have it, is utterly unjust.

Wor. But after all that has been said to the contrary from the press, and the pulpit, can this be a sufficient apology for those who suppose the offence committed by a few wild-headed visionaries is to be justly urged against all ? yea, and to make this a pretence to deny, or virtually to deny, all those divine influences in which consist the very essence and soul of Christianity. In the name of wonder

and common sense, what good can be had from imperceptible influences? Is not the mind as much capable of perceptions or feelings as the body, if not more so? And must we not all feel the motives by which we act? And is a man an enthusiast, because by the grace of God he *feels* himself wise and good, whereas he once *felt* himself wicked and foolish?

Loveg. I thought the ministers of Wellford preached somewhat more consistently with the truth, and the doctrines of the church.

Wor. At one time you would say, he aims well, and that he would hit the mark; then again he seems to fly off, and appears as wide as ever; but he is a man of a decent and a respectable behaviour, and sets a much better example than many others of the clergy in that neighbourhood. I gave him Veñn's Complete Duty of Man, and Witherspoon on Regeneration, and he accepted them very kindly.

Far. The Lord make the books a blessing to his soul! but when I went to Mapleton church, I remember Mr. Dolittle used to give us some sermons about *all-hallows tide* of the same sort; but then to my mind it seems, that whenever they happen to hit upon the truth, it is done all by chance, "*as the blind man shot the crow.*"

Wor. But, Mr. Henry, we came together that you might give us some further account about the matters in Antigua, and tell us something of the history of poor Sancho.

Henry. Why, sir, the first thing I have to notice is that real Christianity is the same in all, and there is no difference in any as it respects the grace of God, whatever difference there may be in the colour of our skins.

Loveg. Do let us hear what poor Sancho told you respecting his being brought to the knowledge of the truth?

Hen. He was never so happy as when he was telling us the story of the converting grace of God upon his heart, and amidst all his afflictions that he had undergone, he would ever be crying "de best is all to come."

Wor. But, Mr. Henry, had we not better first be informed of his history from the beginning, and afterwards hear of his conversion. Your father says it is an interesting story.

Far. Do my child, tell all about it, as you told it to Billy Traffick the other night at our house.

Hen. Sir, I'll recollect it to the best of my power. In Africa the men have frequently more wives than one, and no wonder at it, the men not being so numerous as the women, on account of so many of them being cut off by this bloody traffic; and poor Sancho's father, it seems, had two wives. For the sake of this horrid plunder their town was, as they call it, *broken up*, and Sancho's family escaped through the back door of their hut.

Far. Why, my child, I should never have thought that they had a back door, and a fore door, according to their poor way of living.

Hen. The back door, father, is only designed for their escape when we *Christian* Europeans, as we are called, invade their land, which they have as good a natural right to as you have to your farm; and that back door they always contrive as the device to escape the Hell-hounds that come after them from this country.

Loveg. Hell-hounds, Mr. Henry!—why, surely that was one of the words you were accustomed to make use of on board of ship before you were instructed to use milder language.

Hen. Oh, no, Sir, either on board of ship or on dry land, it is the best expression I can think of for that sort of men. I can hardly conceive where such

people can get their commission but from Hell itself; and, I believe, you will say the same, when I have told you poor Sancho's story.

Wor. Well, then, Mr. Henry, go on; but I fear it will be a disgraceful tale.

Hen. Sir, I told you how Sancho's family escaped through this back door when a Liverpool trader came to assist one of their petty Kings to break up the town in which they lived. Guns and cutlasses rendered them successful in their engagement; and then Sancho well remembers, that, women and children had nothing left them but to escape as well as they could from these tigers in human shape.

Wor. What a scandal to our land, that these licensed tigers should have it in their power to say they are allowed from a land of liberty to entail slavery, and wantonly to murder so many thousands of innocent sufferers, sacrificed at the altar of our luxury and pride! But I interrupt you, Mr. Henry, in continuing your story.

Hen. It was not a very probable circumstance, that the escape of poor Sancho's family could be attended with much success; his father having two wives, one of whom was near her time, the other with a sucking child at her breast, and four other little children with them, Sancho being the eldest of the family, and he not more than ten years of age. Poor Sancho says, he well remembers, that the first who was overtaken was his own mother, the woman who was big with child; but as she was at first seized only by a single man, they thought they might rescue her. Her husband therefore hastily took one of the youngest of his children from off his back, and having placed it upon the ground screaming with misery and fright, he and Sancho ran back to rescue her. This they accomplished, and the family had another run for their lives and liberties; but having lost much

time in the rescue, they were still pursued and overtaken by others. Sancho's father, was soon joined by another man, who was trying to make his escape also : They resisted their pursuers as long as they could, that the women and children, if possible, might make their escape into the neighbouring woods. But the pursuers, supposing their lives were in danger, especially by the determined resolution of poor Sancho's father, who was a strong young fellow, and fearing lest others should come down upon them, fired at him, and killed him dead on the spot.

Wor. What a horrible scene of misery does all this exhibit before us ! But what became of the poor women and children after they saw their only defender drop down *murdered* before their eyes ?

Enn. O Sir ! Sancho says he well remembers the horrid screams of misery and despair he heard from the women the moment they saw his poor father fall : nor could it be supposed, that while they were thus overcome, and distracted with grief, they could long be out of the hands of the bloody pursuers. Thus they availed themselves of the two women and five children, though they conceived that they were obliged to murder the husband, whom they would have been glad to have spared, as it would have answered more for their interest to have sold him than to murder him.

Wor. Could any thing be more shocking ! O that the British parliament would but remember, there was a day in which they once solemnly determined to see to the abolition of this dreadful trade ! Trade did I call it ; why, it is the greatest disgrace to the name of fair and honourable trade, to give it such an appellation. But, Mr. Henry, I suppose you have a deal more to tell us about Sancho and the further calamities of his family.

Hen. Oh, Sir, poor Sancho can scarcely now tell the story, but he drops a tear, when he recollects how they were all dragged back by the bleeding corpse of his father, asking for liberty to fall upon him and embrace him for the last time, while weltering in his blood. But away back to the town that had just been broken up, were they dragged, there to see its inhabitants scattered, and every little comfort they had among themselves, laid waste, and then to bid it an eternal farewell. But it seems they went after the father and mother of the murdered man, to see if they answered their purpose.

Wor. What! and were they also added to the list of their bloody trophies?

Hen. As far as I could learn from Sancho, it was some time before they could find them, but when they discovered the man to be upwards of fifty, and his wife not much less, they *mercifully* left them behind, because they would not answer the end of their detestable traffic; and it seems, as they call it, they were pretty *full slaved* already, and mostly with young slaves, which answers their end best, as the old ones are more apt to die with the *sulks* or hang themselves, as soon as they can get an opportunity after they have been sold.

Wor. What! is it common for them to put an end to their present existence even after they are sold?

Hen. Sir, when I was off Jamaica, I myself saw three of them together one morning who had hanged themselves in the night; and I am told this is an event so very common, that a law is likely to pass prohibiting the importation, but under a certain age.

Wor. A fine story, truly, to be told, that we better their situation in life, by transporting them from Africa, when it seems they would rather hang them-

selves than accept it! But what became of these poor creatures during the middle passage*.

Hen. Why, Sancho told me, that soon after they were all put on board a slave ship, his mother was taken in labour, and delivered of a dead child. The slave captain having been informed by the ship doctor, that it was next to impossible for her to survive the passage, and considering also that she would only take the room of another who might fetch a better price, they *humanely* set her adrift to shift for herself, in that wretched condition; and the first dance poor Sancho had upon deck was when he was made to skip and jump about at the lash of the whip, lest he should die of the *sulks*, because his poor heart was ready to break at the loss of his father, and afterwards at being for ever separated from his mother. However, Sancho says; not a little art was made use of to raise the spirits of the other woman, by promising them that they should all live comfortably together; but grief immediately depriving her of her milk, she had then nothing left but to water her child with her tears whilst she presented it with her dry breasts, and it soon after died in the mother's arms. Still the slave captain supposed he had a good booty in the family as there were three boys and one girl, all of them between three and ten; and half-reared children, as I have before observed, are always supposed best to suit

* The slave trader makes three voyages: the first from England to the coast of Africa, where he gets his horrid cargo; then to the West Indies, or other parts; this is called the middle passage; and then returns to England to refit. Yet to demonstration, it has been proved, that nothing is wanted but a merciful treatment of the negroes themselves, that they may increase and multiply according to the laws of nature. Thus we should still enjoy our luxuries from the tropical climate, and these wasteful voyages would be at an end.

their purpose. It seems, however, that the rest of the *unmurdered* cargo belonging to this family were all landed; the poor weakly woman was scarcely alive when they were put up for sale. She went only for five pounds, while Sancho sold for seventy, and the other children for nearly the same; but dear Sancho little then knew that he was more highly valued by our blessed Lord, whose infinitely precious blood was shed for his redemption.

Loveg. How often have the most wicked devices of some been over-ruled for the salvation of others. I remember hearing, when I was curate at Abley in Yorkshire, how a man was determined to find out the wicked tricks of his wife, who occasionally attended a meeting for prayer at a village in that neighbourhood: and, as the Lord was pleased to over-rule it, one of the company offered up a most tender and affectionate prayer for some then under persecution, that the lions of the world might not tear asunder the lambs of Christ's flock; but that by his grace every lion might be turned into a lamb: and there is every reason to believe it was the mean of his conversion to God. But, Mr. Henry, I must not interrupt you: finish your story.

Hen. Sancho well remembers, that when they were sold, he and the girl, being brother and sister, were sold together; but Sancho knew nothing after that for some years, of the other two children, and the woman who was their mother; and then he found that the woman lived not above a month, and perished in a neglected state, but had the happiness to hear that both his brothers constantly attended the Moravian ministry; and that there was no doubt but one of them was truly converted to God.

Wor. Then they were not allowed to live together, according to promise.

Hen. Promises from an African slave-trader are very rarely thought of after they are made. But in this respect, they had as much tenderness as is usually granted, to let the mother go with her own children, which, now I am told, is more frequently done than formerly, as it answers best their own interest.

Loveg. Such sort of mercy reminds me of that passage, "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel;" for what consolation could this be to the woman or her poor infants, while she was dying with neglect. But it should seem, upon the whole of this business, that three in one family were virtually murdered, that four poor innocent children might be doomed to perpetual slavery when it was utterly impossible that they could deserve it.

Wor. I think you should also take into the account the poor infant who died through the hard treatment of the mother just before the time of her delivery.

Far. (To Mr. Worthy) If your honour could find out that any poor parish 'prentice was treated half as bad, I am sure you would give them to know *the rights of it*; but it is wonderful to me that there is no bringing people to justice for such dreadful doings.

Hen. Why, father, some of them will tell you that there is no injustice in any of their doings, and that they only take them as lawful captives in war; and that, for ought they know to the contrary, their wars may be as just as ours; while, at the same time, they do all in their power to excite them to these abominable wars, but I never could find what justice had to do with war, excepting for self-defence.

Loveg. Why, the Scriptures have decided that already. "Whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence; even from your lusts that war in your members?" It is an ambitious,

lust of power that has kindled the flames of war in thousands of instances, and it is impossible to calculate how many millions have been sacrificed at the altar of our pride thereby ; but when we are all brought under the meek, and mild, and loving influences of the Gospel, “ nations shall learn war no more.”

[*Mr. Lovegood's eldest daughter, about five years old, comes in all in tears.*]

Mrs. Loveg. O, my dear, you should not come into the parlour without leave when there is company.—But what is the matter ?

Child. Mamma, Pretty face will die,—John Cheeseman came to try to make her well again, but he says, he is sure she will die, and then what shall we do, we shall never go a milking any more.

Wor. Alas, alas ! what can be the cause of these sad lamentations ?

Mrs. Loveg. O, Sir, our poor cow that you were so kind as to give us, the beginning of last winter, has met with a terrible calamity, by being goaded by some other cows on the common, and we made bold to send to your cow-keeper, to beg him to look at her after he had done work : for it used to be a high treat to our little ones to go and feed and milk the cow.

Wor. (*To the child*) Never mind, my dear ; there are more cows than one in the country. I dare say. we shall find another Prettyface, who will give her milk to your brothers, and little sister that is in the cradle.

Mr. Loveg. Oh, Sir, I wish the child had not mentioned it. You quite overpower us with your favours.

Wor. Indeed, while you provide us so plentifully with “ the sincere milk of the word,” at so low a rate, the least that we can do will be to pro-

vide you a little milk for your family.—[Should this part of the dialogue be continued, the modesty of the parties might be considerably offended. As, therefore, the author has the highest respect for Mr. Lovegood and Mr. Worthy; and as he would not, upon any account, forfeit the honour and favour of preaching in Mr. Lovegood's church, whenever he goes that way, he begs leave to drop this part of the subject, and proceed.]

Mrs. Wor. I hope, Mr. Henry, you have now told us of all the evils poor Sancho has been called to suffer; and, I am sure, you have related enough to chill one's blood. We shall be glad to hear next what were the merciful providences which brought him to the knowledge of the Gospel.

Hen. Alas! madam, there was a deal to be undone upon poor Sancho's mind before any thing could be done. He has oftentimes told me of his dread and hatred of the Christian's God, before he knew better; and, to be sure, his ideas on this subject were not less natural than curious.

Loveg. What were they, Mr. Henry?

Hen. One night, soon after he was landed in Antigua, and while he was seeking rest for his distracted mind, which he rarely could meet with, he verily thought it must be more than a dream, for that he actually saw the Christian's God, and that he was an uncommon tall white * monster, for that he was a god of a very powerful nation; and as his worshippers were always calling upon him, to *damn* and *blast* and *curse* almost every one they spoke to, he supposed him to be a most cruel and mischievous god indeed. No wonder, therefore, that Sancho's imagination, further represented this large monster to him, though of human shape, yet as

* Men of colour have a peculiar abhorrence of the idea of white.

having on his shoulders a most horrid tiger's head, with jaws capable of devouring fifty or a hundred of our fellow creatures at a meal; that round his head there were an innumerable quantity of all sorts of serpents and scorpions, and of all sizes; that his paunch or maw, was of such an uncommon size, as made him appear a monster indeed: that he had not only the head, but the paws, of a tiger, both on his arms and legs; and that it was most frightful to see how he could tear up the ground, and all that came in his way with his horrid talons; that he had a tail of such an amazing length, with a fiery sting at the end of it, that whenever he whisked it about, he did uncommon mischief thereby; that he had all around his immensely large body, a prodigious number of casks of rum and gunpowder, with swords, guns, cutlasses and all other instruments of war in terrible and vast abundance, that were made for him by the Christians who worship him; and that when he arose to shake himself the noise was most tremendous. That this horrid, monstrous, white god of the Christians, had a detestable partiality to the creatures of his own making; and that he frequently strided over the seas, that he might satiate his bloody appetite upon the poor Africans; that thousands of his little white imps were ordered to attend him in the different slave-trade ships; that as soon as they all landed, he had nothing to do but to stand upright and to look all around him, to see if he could find any peaceable, quiet towns, which were ignorant of his arrival, from this his *christian* country; that then he would whisk his most tremendous tail over that country, as a signal to all his imps to plunder and murder as fast as they could, distributing among them his casks, arms, and ammunition for that purpose; and then as fast as these captives could be brought to him by his bloody imps,

he would swallow them down by scores; that one morning he came over from the Christian's country so hungry, that he devoured "four thousand five hundred at one meal*;" and that he is scarcely satisfied unless his imps procure him a hundred thousand year by year; and that when his maw begins to be so full that he can gorge no more, the rest of them he gives over to the care of his *buckra* † imps, who take them beyond the seas, that they may be kept for him, so that he may send for them, or come after them, whenever he thinks proper to devour them. Such was Sancho's idea of the God of *buckra* men; and the dream, or vision, was so strong upon his mind, that he could scarcely persuade himself it was not a reality.

Loveg. Indeed his idea of the Christian's god is not less natural than our crimes are enormous; but what opinion had he of their own gods?

Hen. He thought that some of their gods were bad enough, but nothing like so wicked as our god; but, blessed be the Lord, Sancho has been better taught since then. He now knows that "God is b ve."

Loveg. Yes, Mr. Henry, that is the part of the story we want to hear, how poor Sancho came by the knowledge of the gospel.

Hen. For some time after poor Sancho was sold, he had reason to groan under his bondage; and all that time he was kept in sad ignorance; but afterward he had masters who were much more humane; and they encouraged the preaching of the gospel on their plantations: but still Sancho kept up his prejudice against the Christians' God. The first thing

* See Dialogue IX. p. 7.

† The negro name for a white man.

which forcibly struck him was the meek and humble deportment of two Christian slaves, a man and his wife, during a hurricane that was in those parts some years ago, and which was fatal to the lives of many. He wondered to hear them talk about their dear loving Saviour all the time their poor cots were blowing about their ears, and their lives in continual danger; nor could he make it out, while he was trembling and quaking under the apprehensions of death, notwithstanding he had met with so many things to sicken him of life, to hear them rejoicing and singing. One little hymn they sung over so often, that Sancho well remembered the words.

While thunders and tempests are rolling above,
I trust in my Saviour, and rest on his love :
The thunders of vengeance shall never annoy
The peaceable rest which in Christ I enjoy.

My blood-shedding Jesus I claim as my rock,
Who carefully screens the poor lambs of the flock ;
I trust on his mercy, and live on his grace,
And under his cross is my sweet dwelling place.

While Jesus sits smiling above the black cloud,
I'll sing to his praises Hosannas aloud ;
For soon will he take me to regions above,
To bask in his presence and feast on his love.

Then here, my Redeemer, I'll sit at thy feet ;
Should death overtake me, I humbly submit.
Then come the bless'd moment in which I'm to die,
For Jesus hath lov'd me, I cannot say why.

Then the poor man would cry in their broken language, "O my dear wifey, you and I cast ourselves on de dear Saviour, for "he careth for us." O what a loving Saviour he is to care for such poor sinful human creatures as we are." Then when an-

other tremendous clap of thunder was intermixing itself in the storm, he would cry,

And when thy loud thunders are rolling above,
We'll trust in thy mercy, and feast on thy love.

Then again he would say, "Our most dear Saviour is 'a hiding place from de storm and a covert 'from de tempest, and de shadow of a great rock in a 'weary land.' De storm cannot hurt us if it should kill us; for den we should go to de dear Saviour, who has been so loving and good to our sinful hearts." Such was the substance of the conversation and behaviour, so far as Sancho recollects it, of these poor creatures during the hurricane; and which was quite new to him, having never seen till now any thing like the holy patience which belongs to the real Christian.

Loveg. I should suppose, from this circumstance, Sancho began to have a more favourable opinion of the Christian's God.

Hen. Sancho, from that time, began to have an idea that the Christians had two gods; a very dreadful bad god, and a very merciful and good God.

Wor. Why really Sancho was not far short of the mark; the god of this world is quite as bad a god as Sancho could suppose him to be; but, I hope, he soon after this got acquainted with the good God; for, I am sure, he had suffered enough from the bad god.

Hen. For a time the poor creature said "He was afraid to serve de good God, because he appeared so much more weak dan de bad god. He observed, dat none of the great *buckra* men, nor any of deir rich masseys, served de good God, but laughed at all dat did; and dat dey did not like to serve de

good God, because he would not allow dem to get rich by stealing and cruelty; nor to be angry and spiteful, nor to live in drunkenness and lewdness; and dat dere was one great Island about dose parts where all de people served de great bad god, so dat dey quite devoured up dose dat served de good God*."

Wor. Poor Sancho's discovery, however, that there was a good God, as well as a bad one, might have been of considerable use to his mind, and, doubtless, led him to enquire further after the truth.

Loveg. Why really he appeared to know more of the truth, even in that state, than many among us. I am positive that Sancho's conceptions of the nature of God were more consistent than what is too generally admitted among ourselves. What loose notions are to be found among many who believe in the unity of the divine existence†; as if an allowance of sin could be found in the same holy Being, who from the infinite perfection of his nature, cannot but eternally abhor it.

Mrs. Loveg. But I hope, Mr. Henry, you will let us hear the rest of Sancho's experience. The bells will ring for church in about half of an hour, and my husband loves a little retirement before he begins the service.

Hen. I have already observed, that Sancho's taskmasters began to be much less rigid and severe: and

* It is probable Sancho has a reference to Jamaica, which is perhaps the nearest resemblance of the gates of hell of any place in the British dominions.

† The Socinians are very fond of claiming to themselves the title of Unitarians, as if they alone believed in the unity of the Divine Essence. Can this arise from Ignorance? They know that we no more believe in the existence of three Gods, than themselves.

it therefore became more the custom to encourage marriage on the plantation on which Sancho laboured. Against this, however, he always had an objection, lest he should have an offspring to be made as miserable as himself; but as he found his own situation much altering for the better, he began to turn his thoughts that way; but still he determined, if ever he did marry, to unite himself to one who served the good God, as he conceived he should be much happier with her than another. He accordingly paid his addresses to two or three young female slaves, while all of them were in one tone: "Me no love you, me no be your wifey, you no love our dear Saviour." All these refusals made Sancho more anxious to make further enquiries about the dear Saviour, and this was the first thing that induced him to go into the chapels belonging to those good people called Moravians.

Loveg. It appears that this poor artless man had some secret drawings in his mind after good, but that as yet he did not know where it was to be found. I am sure, wherever there is a conviction of that which is wrong, and a holy desire to be right, such persons are not far from the kingdom of heaven.

Hen. So it appeared with Sancho. For, as soon as he began to hear the praying and singing and preaching of these good people, his eyes were at once fastened on them, and his heart was soon brought to receive the gospel. O! it was his delight to tell how his soul was won over to the blessed service of God by hearing of the glad tidings of salvation.

Mrs. Loveg. And I hope it will be as delightful to us to hear of it: do make haste, Mr. Henery, and tell us more of it before we go to church.

Hen. Oh! madam, it was very pleasant to hear

with what sweet surprize he was led to attend on their ministry. He was first not a little astonished and softened by their singing, when it came into his mind how different it was from the mad bellowings, roarings, and screamings which are to be found among the wretched slaves of sin; and when compared to the execrable shouts of triumph made among those cruel tormentors of the human race, who brought him from Africa.

Far. Ah! Henry, my child, you can now speak from experience. Neither you nor I knew any thing of happiness, till we were blessed with the grace of God upon our hearts, and now God has loved us, my dear child, how sweetly we love one another! (*Farmer much affected.*)

Hen. Yes, blessed be God, father, that we now know what it is to have that kingdom of God established in our hearts, which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Loveg. None can tell the happiness they enjoy, who are blessed with "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and which keeps the heart and mind through Jesus Christ."—But if Sancho was so affected under the singing, how did his mind feel under the sermon?

Hen. I was going to tell you, Sir. The minister was, it seems, then preaching upon that text, "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." O how Sancho delighted to tell of the effects of that sermon on his heart.

Wor. Can you give us the particulars, Mr. Henry?

Hen. Why, Sir, he told me, that the minister introduced his sermon by remarking, what a deal of pains was taken in the plantations to destroy the *borers* that were so injurious to the sugar canes;

and he supposed, that no merciful planter could ever wantonly wish to kill these poor insects, while each of them might probably feel as much as though "a giant died," provided he could but instruct them not to injure him any more. Then he asked the question, if there was a planter so wise as to contrive a plan to instruct them better, as what they did was the cause of their own destruction? Then he observed, that before any planter was capable of instructing these poor borers, of his good will towards them, he must become a borer himself. Then he cried, "O the wisdom and mercy of God our Saviour towards our unmerciful and depraved race, for that we on earth were no more in the sight of God, than these little insects are in our sight. Yet that he might prove his mercy towards us, and that he might make known the riches of his love, he appeared as one of our own race, and suffered in our stead all that we deserved from the justice of his holy Father, for transgressing against his good and righteous law. This simple, yet beautiful display of the love of God towards man so affected poor Sancho, that he scarcely knew the ground he trod upon; and methinks I see him now, just as I then saw him while relating this part of his story, with his eyes lifted up, each of them filled with a floating tear of gratitude and joy, and then crying, in their language,

Let all de world fall down and know,
Dat none but God such love could show.

Lovey. What a mercy it is, that the Lord has inclined the hearts of these good people to labour with so much disinterestedness and holy zeal to bring these abject sinners to the knowledge of the gospel! But, I dare say, Sancho had somewhat fur-

ther to say of the particular effect the sermon had upon his heart.

Hen. He next told me, as he expressed himself, "that when all de broders and sisters dat stood near him saw dat our dear Saviour was breaking his heart," they all began to smile and weep for joy; and after the service was over they came round him like a swarm of bees; saying one after another "O, my dear broder, how glad we are dat hearing of de death and sufferings of our dear Saviour has made you feel de grace of a broken heart. Now, broder, he will make you happy, and he will come and live in your heart while you lie at his cross. O how welcome is de poor sinner to de loving Saviour." He afterwards told me, that he was soon persuaded to visit the good man he had heard preach; and when poor Sancho began telling him what a wicked heart he now found he had, he was a little surprised to hear him say all that was very good; and when he began to complain still deeper, he was yet more surprised when he said, that was better still; and when he further told him that he was so very wicked, that he must be ruined for ever, if our blessed Saviour would not save him as the chief of sinners, he was quite astonished when the minister joined in saying, "O my dear broder, that is best of all; how glad I am that you have received the grace to know your great need of the blood-shedding and atonement of our blessed Lord." Soon after this, Sancho beginning to find the conflict within himself common to all Christians, came and told the minister of a discovery he had made, that he had two souls, a good one, and a very bad one; the minister explained to him from whence his mistake arose, and that he had not two souls, but two very different principles in one and the same soul. Upon

a further discovery of the truths of the gospel, Sancho, however, quickly found himself a much happier man than ever he had been before; he walked in the love and fear of the Lord, and was soon baptized, and admitted to communion among these good people. And after that, was married to one of the women who would have had nothing to do with him because he did not then love the dear Saviour.

Loveg. Why these good people have a dialect peculiar to themselves! but, notwithstanding some peculiarities of expression, they are most affectionately and warmly attached to the essential truths of the gospel: and I am sure, wherever that is the case, mere modes of expression are of very little consequence; they have set an example to all the world in their zeal for the salvation of sinners, which never can be sufficiently admired.

Far. Henry, my child, I wish you could have brought Sancho and his family with you. How delighted I should have been to have had them all to work at our farm. I dare say we could have done very well by them, for Christians love to be diligent.

Hen. Ah! father, you don't understand matters. A slave in those parts is as much his master's property, as your hogs and stock of cattle are a part of your property.

Far. The more's the pity, my child, a thousand and a thousand times over.

[The bells striking up for church, Mr. Lovegood retires to his study; the Farmer, Henry and Mr. Worthy, take the opportunity to walk out to see if there could be any thing done for poor Prettyface; and thus ends the dialogue on the Slave Trade.]

DIALOGUE XIV.

A WHISPER FROM BEHIND THE DOOR; OR THE SE-
CRETS OF PRIVATE SCANDAL MADE PUBLIC:
BEING

A WINTER Evening's conversation over a Dish of Tea and a Game of Cards, at old Madam TOOGOOD's, of Lower Brookfield, (mentioned in Dialogue III. who lived on an Annuity of 150*l.* a Year ;) between the good old Lady,

The Rev. Mr. SPITEFUL, Master of the Free Grammar School, in Envy Lane, Mapleton, who had whipped away all his Scholars but one or two, that he might live at his Leisure, and still enjoy the Profits of the Endowment, availing himself of other Advantages by his occasional Services among the neighbouring Clergy ;

Mr. WISEHEAD, a Bookseller in the same Town, a strict Attendant on Dr. DRONISH, and his Assistant the Rev. Mr. SMIRKING ;

Mr. CONSIDERATE, one of the Aldermen of Mapleton, who possessed a few Houses in the Town, and a small freehold in the neighbourhood, and who had lately given more regular attendance on Mr. Lovegood, with his Wife and Daughter, who had been constant attendants some time before ;

Miss PRATEAPACE, a young woman, who was an Apothecary's Daughter, one of Madam Toogood's God-daughters, and an apprentice of Madam Flirt, the Milliner ; and

Miss POLLY LITTLEWORTH.

Miss PATTY was also expected, but both the young *Ladies* could not attend, as it was *Washing Week* at Gracehill Farm.

The conversation was thus introduced. Miss. Polly comes in all in a bustle.

Miss Polly. I am *perdigiously* sorry, ladies and gentlemen, if I have made you wait, but my mother wanted me to call at Mr. Traffick's, of the shop, as I was coming this way, for some grocery and other shop goods. I protest I have walked so fast that I am all in a state of *prosperation*—(*The tea is called for and introduced.*)

Spiteful. I wonder that every body should be running to that shop, to support such a schismatical enthusiast, as though there were no other shops but his. I would turn my servant away, if he should dare to go there for a *hap'worth* of sand.

Mr. Considerate. Now really, Sir, you do no good by such vehemence. If a man acts conscientiously in his business, I don't see what we have to do with his religion; and, I believe, on all hands, it is acknowledged, that Mr. Traffick is very just in all his dealings.

Miss. Polly. Sir, my father insists upon it, that we must all run *gallopping* to that shop. I hardly think he would let our Sam wear a livery if he did not send there for all the trimmings: and when I was there, to be sure how he *held forth* behind the counter, as though he had been in a pulpit, about the miraculous conversion of my brother, as he called it. I am sure, of late, we are quite *suffocated** with religion in our house.

Mr. Spiteful. Yes, *conversion* is a mighty word with them; for it seems that not only such men as

* Miss. Polly probably meant *surfeited*.

your brother, who was once so wild, and is now become so *sanctified*, but every one who steps a little aside from their strict notions of religion, they suppose to be no better than heathens, and they must all be converted or be damned. Mr. Wisehead, you are a man of reading, and I dare say you admit the justice of my remark against these enthusiasts.

Wisehead. In my opinion, Sir, it is very injudicious to bring forward the words conversion and regeneration, as though they could be in any sense applicable among *us Christians* in the present day. They were only designed for primitive times, when people were brought over from being Jews or Pagans, to be of our holy religion: but how can any of us be converted to the Christian religion, when we are Christians already.

Mr. Consid. What then, Sir, do you think that Henry Littleworth was a Christian when he and his comrades kept our town in a perpetual uproar; and when one evening they got from your barber one of your old wigs, and put it on an ass's head, and then drove him down the town, and into your shop, saying Mr. Wisehead was come to sup with his brother?

Wiseh. Certainly, Sir, these were very unwise and irrational steps in that giddy youth; notwithstanding it were the highest reflection upon the Supreme Being to suppose we have not within ourselves, from the principles of *natural religion*, sufficient powers to reform ourselves from our vicious courses; for what purpose has the Almighty given to every man both reason and conscience, if these were not adequate to the reformation of mankind?

Consid. Why really, Sir, I can't see what great matters reason has ever done in the reformation of mankind; she seems to stand aside, and let nine-tenths act by mere passion and appetite; and as for

conscience, I am sure, among thousands, that acts like an unfaithful and intoxicated watchman, without either eyes or brains. I believe that my wife's minister is quite right in his doctrine, that all the faculties of the human mind are exceedingly vitiated and depraved; and till God mends reason and conscience, they will never mend us.

Wiseh. But, Sir, if mankind are vicious, it is their own fault; for we *may* be all good if we *will*.

Consid. Certainly so. (*To Mrs. Toogood.*) See, madam, how your cat is a licking and cleaning herself all over.

Madam Toogood. Oh, Sir, she is a lovely delicate creature.

Consid. (*To Mr. Wisehead.*)—Then I suppose she has a *will* to be clean, and she proves the point, she may be clean if she *will*. (*To Miss Polly.*) Now, Miss Polly Littleworth, did you ever see any of your father's hogs sit upright, and wash and clean themselves with their fore feet like that cat? and they certainly *may* if they *will*; but, alas, they want the will.

Spiteful. Well, such a thought, had I lived a thousand years, would never have entered my brains; but pray, are we to be compared to hogs and cats?

Consid. Why, in the Bible men have been compared to brutes before now: to lions, bears, tigers, or leopards, wolves, foxes, and dogs, and to birds also, not less ravenous than such sort of beasts, to eagles, vultures, ravens, and others; yes, and to the worst of reptiles, to vipers themselves. But I only ask, if there ever was found that creature, either among men or brutes, that could *will* contrary to his inclination or disposition? What then can we mean by saying, we may all be good if we *will*? who in their senses ever denied it? Just so bad men *will* be bad, and good men *will* be good. Is not

every one's will regulated by his disposition? Such, however, is the glib nonsense of the day.

Wiseh. I hope, Sir, you do not think, that we *rational* dissenters talk nonsense; but according to your notions (and I would not wish to misunderstand you, as I believe you have a *good heart*, and mean well) man is a mere machine—and there is an end to all distinction between virtue and vice in man, if we are *obliged* to act according to our dispositions, and have *no power* to correct them.

Madam Toogood. Oh! shocking, shocking, Mr. Considerate, I never thought you could believe in such bad notions of religion. I am very sorry to hear, that of late you have been such a strict follower of Lovegood. I am sure he preaches very wicked doctrines.

Spitef. Yes, madam, and such are the tenets held forth at Brookfield church. I suppose that Atheism will be preached there next.

Consid. Now I beg, Sir, you would be a little more dispassionate and give me a calm answer to the following question: Supposing you should ask any of the wild sparks in our town the reason why they gave way to such courses, what do you think would be their answer? Why, that they were *overpowered* by temptation and inclination before they submitted to such ways.

Spitef. I suppose they might, Sir; but what of that?

Consid. Then it seems they wanted strength or power to resist, and that reason and conscience did them no good, and that they were conquered by the wicked inclinations and corruptions of their hearts.

Spitef. But if you make it out that these people acted against their wills in what they did, I can see no harm in any of their wicked tricks.

Consid. Stop, Sir, you go on too fast: did I sup-

pose that they acted *against* their wills, when they acted *according* to their inclinations? Is not every man's will and inclination virtually the same? And are not all people, with bad inclinations, *willfully* wicked, while others, with good inclinations are *willingly* pious? I think, Mr. Wisehead, the will is nothing but the servant of the understanding and inclinations.

Wiseh. (*Giving his forehead a grave and judicious scratch.*) Really, Sir, your question is so intricate and important, I would rather take some time to consider that point. Before I venture upon an answer, I should like to talk to our ministers. The Doctor and Mr. Smirking, I'll assure you, Sir, are very *rational* and able divines, and as you are in the habit of calling at our shop to read the news: in a day or two hence I hope I shall be able to give you a satisfactory answer; and then, sir, we can step into our back parlour, and have a few words further on this subject.

Spitef. (*All in a hurry.*) Why, where is the difficulty of answering that question? What has the understanding or the inclination to do with the will? Have we not all a free will to act as we like best? Had not I a free will to come here, and must I not have a free will to go home again?

Consid. Pray, Sir, have you a free will to throw yourself into the fire, or jump into the water, or to go to Brookfield church next Sunday?

Spitef. How can a man have a free will to do those things which he naturally hates?

Consid. Why then, having no inclination to throw yourself into the fire or water, or to go to Brookfield Church, there would be no getting you to do these things but by force. Now I always thought, with you, ever since I have considered this point, that every man's will must be free to follow his incli-

nations and dispositions; and that is the reason why the world live so wickedly, because they like it best. And I think if you had attended a little more to the feelings of your own mind, and the minds of others, you would have found it out that all people act according to their inclinations and dispositions, whether good or bad, and that the understanding debates according to the object set before it; next comes the choice, and the will at last determines to pursue the object that is *suggested* by the inclinations, *digested* by the understanding, and *preferred* by the choice: [*to Miss Polly,*] and I dare say, Miss Polly, if your worthy father was one of the party, he would at once see that all this talk about free will was but *putting the cart before the horse*; for of this I am persuaded, we never act but as we are acted upon, and that good or evil are the result of all actions according to the habit of the mind.

Spitef. Then we are all like pumps, or wheelbarrows, and not rational creatures. I am for *rational religion* with Mr. Wisehead.

Consid. And so am I too, Sir; but though rational creatures make machines, yet there is no rationality in the machine itself. Now I believe every man exercises his reason according to his nature and disposition; and when I suppose the pure and holy word of God is proposed to the choice of all, they who reject it do it with the utmost freedom of the will, because they dislike it, and that all good men have exactly the same freedom of will in the choice of good; "for if the Son shall make us free, then we are free indeed;" and when we are commanded "to work out our salvation with fear and trembling," that we may properly work at all, we are told, "it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure," and that we are made "his willing people in the day of his power." So

that instead of being an enemy to *rational* religion, I cannot see how there can be any religion that is not *rational*.

Spitef. Where, Sir, in the name of wonder, did you get all these cramp expressions from?

Consid. Why, Sir, from a book I am ashamed I have paid so little attention to, till of late,—the Bible: and while you and Mr. Wisehead are attempting to explain away all those fine strong expressions of “conversion, regeneration, a new creation,” and the like, I have of late seen that a peculiar wisdom and glory belongs to them; and that it is no unmeaning abstruse metaphor, but a plain downright matter of fact, that “except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

Spitef. I always thought it would come to this, since you have lately taken to follow your wife and daughter to Brookfield church: it seems to me as if all the people were running mad together.

Consid. I acknowledge I had my secret prejudices, yet I could scarcely tell why, against my wife and daughter when they first took to go to Brookfield church; but I was satisfied, anger and opposition could answer no good end whatever. And when they requested that Mr. Lovegood might give us a visit at our house, soon after our great family trial, I confess I was not a little struck with his behaviour: and though I took an opportunity to dispute every inch of ground, I thought (from mere prejudice) I could maintain; yet such was the force of truth, and such was the tender, gentleman-like and affectionate way in which he treated me; while I rather had a design to expose him, by holding him at arm's length before my wife and daughter, that I found myself entirely disarmed; and from that time I determined to go and hear

* See Dialogue XXIX.

him more constantly ; for I discovered him to be a man of uncommonly good understanding, and of a truly Christian spirit.

Spitef. And thus, Sir, you have told us how you have been seduced from your regular attendance at your parish church by one of these artful modern reformers. Hang them all ! They will be the ruin of our nation.

Madam Toog. Ladies and gentlemen, is your tea sweet enough ?

Consid. Quite so, I thank you, ma'am ; but I think a few lumps more of sugar in Mr. Spiteful's tea would not be amiss, for there seems to be somewhat very *bitter* upon his palate that wants *sweetening*.

Madam Toog. Why, Mr. Spiteful, at times, has complained that sugar is apt to turn *sour* on his stomach.

Consid. To be *sour* as well as *bitter* at the same time must be a terrible calamity. Would it be amiss, Mr. Spiteful, if you were to come with us next Sunday to Brookfield church for some of Mr. Lovegood's *elixir* ? he has an excellent recipe to cure *sour* stomachs and *bitter* palates. I have known many people that have been diseased in the same way, who were afterwards cured by attending at Brookfield church. Pray, Sir, do any of the doctors in your way perform such cures ?

Spitef. Upon my word, Sir, I shan't put up with all this banter. I beg you would be less free with your skits and jokes. What is it to you what cures we perform ?

• *Wiseh.* Really, Mr. Spiteful, in my opinion, Mr. Considerate has quite as much reason to be displeased with you for your disrespectful speeches against his friend Mr. Lovegood, as you have to be displeased with him for a few innocent humorous

turns. I believe, Mr. Lovegood, in his way, may be a very good man; notwithstanding his notions in religion are so widely different from ours. We should be better able to carry our point, if you could deliver your sentiments with less heat and more deliberation.

Spitef. How can I help it? What, is no allowance to be made for a man's disposition?

Consid. I thought you said a little time ago, we may do what we will, notwithstanding our dispositions or inclinations. Pray, Sir, which side of the question do you mean to take after all—that men *may will, if they will*, contrary to their dispositions and inclinations; or, that as we are disposed and inclined, so we *will and act*?

Spitef. Really, Sir, I wish you would drop these abstruse metaphysical discussions. I came here for a little innocent chat, and not to enter into a debate upon such a curious subject as this.

Consid. With all my heart, Sir; but then it is to be hoped we are not all to be called fools and madmen, because we suppose it necessary for a man to have the grace of God in his heart, so that our evil dispositions may be rooted out, and that we may feel ourselves inclined or made willing to obey. I don't think we pray like enthusiasts when we pray to the Lord after each command, in our church service, that he would "incline our hearts to keep his law."

Miss Polly. Well, I declare I don't think I should have come here this evening if I thought I was to hear nothing but this talk about religion. I was in hopes we were to have had a little harmless chat and a game of cards.

Spitef. I dare say Mr. Considerate has lately got so *sanctified* that he would not touch a card for all the world.

Consid. Why, truly, Sir, I cannot find what good we get by such sort of amusements, that are only calculated to tempt us to *kill* time, when we are directed to *redeem* it; and how far we can or cannot have “our conversation always for the use of edifying, that it may administer grace to the hearers,” while we are so engaged, I suppose is easy to be determined.

Spitef. What, then, are we to be always *saying our prayers*, and are we to have no innocent recreations?

Consid. Yes, Sir, you know I am fond of a garden, and I have this day been recreating myself by pruning and training a peach tree; and I felt it all the time entirely an innocent recreation: but I always found these games of hazard and chance were unhappily calculated to excite a spirit of emulation and gambling, which have a tendency to promote the worst of tempers; and though some may play with as much comparative innocency as I felt in pruning a fruit tree, yet there is a certain bewitchery belonging to this sort of games, which renders them at all times very dangerous in themselves, and very destructive in their consequences.

Madam Toog. Oh, Mr. Considerate, this is going too far. I really cannot see that we need be quite so strict, I love an innocent game at cards as well as any body; but then I always give my winnings to the poor; but I am very sorry I must not be one of the party to-night, as it happens to be the week before sacrament, and then I never touch a card. Thank the Almighty, I never neglect my duty.

Miss Prateap. Well, well, I dare say, ma'am, you don't think it necessary that we young folks should wear old heads on our shoulders. I am for being neither saint nor sinner. You know, ma'am.

my mother was a clergyman's daughter, and if the clergy cannot tell what is right, I don't know who should, and she never brought us up with such strict notions of religion. I see no harm in a game of cards, and a little chearful chit-chat; *God-amighty never gave us our tongues for nothing.*

Madam Toog. Yes, Miss, I am quite of your way of thinking; but then while we are using our tongues in a way of harmless chat, we should not neglect, upon proper occasions, to use them for the purposes of our religion, in doing our duty, and *saying our prayers*; and I hope, my dear, you'll take your god-mother's advice till after you are confirmed; and properly prepare yourself for that before the bishop comes round next time.

Miss Polly. I hope it will not be necessary to submit to all this *trouble* for the salvation of my soul till I am a deal older.

Madam Toog. O no, Miss; we must make some allowance for youth: when I was a *lass*, I confess I did not think it necessary to *take to religion so strictly* as I have done of late. I know that it requires a deal of resolution to submit to "the trials, and troubles, and discipline of a virtuous life." *

Consid. Why my wife and daughter have for above these four years *trudged* away to Mr. Lovegood's almost all weathers, and it is a long walk there and back again; and when I used to tell her the trouble she took, till I found it was a pleasure to go with her myself, her answer was, his "yoke is ~~easy~~ easy, and his burden light;" and that "his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are paths of peace."

* This expression, in its original form, is to be found in the writings of Dr. Priestley; so that all the absurdities deducible from it are not to be charged on the Old Lady, but on the Doctor, the oracle of the *rational Dissenters* of the day.

Madam Toog. O, Sir, but I love to *mortify myself* in my religion.

Consid. Well, I am sure my wife does not mortify herself in her religion; for she is always as happy as she well can be, whenever she has a journey to Brookfield.—Pray, Madam, do you *mortify yourself* when you are honest, just, or sober, or when you tell the truth?

Madam Toog. O, no, Sir, I hope I know my duty better than all that.

Consid. Why then, Madam, how is it that you mortify yourself when you serve God?

Spitef. Don't answer him, Ma'am, I perceive he is upon the catch. If I had a wife and daughter who ran about at this rate, neglecting their duty at home, I would sooner break their legs than suffer it.

Consid. Why, Sir, my wife never neglected her duty at home: a good wife she was before she went to Brookfield church, and a better ever since.

Miss Polly. Well, well, I see we shall have no cards if we are to talk about religion after this fashion. If you, Mrs. Toogood, and Mr. Considerate, don't like to play, I can't see why the rest of us mayn't sit down to a game at whist, for we have all done tea.

Madam Toog. Becky Prateapace, my dear, will you ring the bell, that Nelly may take away the tea things, and bring the cards.

Miss Prateap. That I will, Madam, with all my heart, and I'll have Mr. Wisehead for my partner, and you shall play with Mr. Spiteful, Miss Polly.

Miss Polly. I don't care who I play with, provided I may but have a game at cards.

[The cards are consequently introduced, the parties settle to the work, while the old lady and

Mr. Considerate hold a *tete-a-tete* at one corner of the room. The reader would be little entertained at the idle frivolous conversation of the card table, the substance of which was from the fertile genius of Mr. Spiteful, who continued his occasional invectives, especially between the deals, against modern seducers and enthusiasts; and among other things was running them down for their pretended pharisaic sanctity for doing so much more than their neighbours. This, Mr. Considerate overhearing, asked Mr. Spiteful how many scholars he had left at his free grammar school? and what he had year by year for the slight attendance he gave to two or three children, just by way of keeping up the name of a school? and whether it was not as great a crime for some to do too little, as for others to do too much? and whether it would be consistent to charge an honest hard working day labourer with such crimes because he would do three times the work of an idle careless fellow, who scarcely would do any work at all? This so irritated Mr. Spiteful that it threw him off his guard, and rendered him quite inattentive, when Miss Polly, as his partner, had also to lecture him for his negligence, declaring she had lost eighteen pence by him already, while the grave Mr. Wisehead was profiting by his folly; declaring she would play with him no more, unless he would mind his cards. Mr. Considerate joined with them, that there might be no more quarrelling, there had better be no more playing. The hint was accordingly taken; and as Miss Polly said she was quite out of luck, the cards were cleared away. The two misses and the old lady retired to one corner of the room for a little cheap talk in their way, and in the next Dialogue, the concluding part of the conversation will be presented to the reader.]

DIALOGUE XV.



CONTAINING THE SECOND PART OF THE SAME CONVERSATION, WHICH WAS THUS INTRODUCED BY MR. CONSIDERATE.

Consid. I SHOULD be glad to know, if any further dispute should arise between us, how far we are to settle the controversy by the Bible: for I understand your notions of the Bible are very loose—at least as I suppose.

Wiseh. Just so far, Sir, as it is consonant with reason, and no further; I never can believe that which contradicts my reason.

Consid. Indeed, Sir, if this be the case, we are likely to be terribly misguided; while reason, among our ignorant and benighted race, appears to be so much under the influence of prejudice and passion. If twenty men of different persuasions be called together, however flatly they may contradict each other, they would all tell you they are guided by reason.

Spitef. Well, Sir, for all that, I am quite of Mr. Wisehead's opinion, that we have no business with the Bible, when it flatly contradicts our reason, though in all points we may not understand it. It would be a fine thing surely, if we were to believe what we cannot comprehend, or else *go to hell and be damned!*

Consid. Why, then, Sir, am I so to understand you and Mr. Wisehead, as to suppose you are

Atheists, for you cannot comprehend the incomprehensible attributes of God; or that you do not believe your own existence, because you cannot understand the nature of that existence? If you and Mr. Wisehead are only to believe the Bible so far as you can comprehend it; that book, in your opinion, is nothing better than a mere history of uncertain events; and then, notwithstanding revelation; we have nothing left us but to guess at religion as well as we can.

Wisch. Sir, I believe the book, which we generally call the Bible, is but little more than the works of good men, subject to the same infirmities with ourselves: who, though they might have written according to the best of their judgments, were still frequently warped by their national prejudices in favour of their own religion*.

Consid. Indeed, gentlemen, if the word *conversion* should be inapplicable to young Mr. Henry Littleworth, yet it cannot be unsuitable to either of you; for Jews and Pagans believe a part of the Bible as well as yourselves, while neither you nor they give any more credit to it, as the Book of Revelation, than I do to the History of Robinson Crusoe.

Spitef. Why, really, Mr. Wisehead, I begin to be afraid we are going rather too far; this is making out the Bible to be but little better than an old ill-written ecclesiastical history. Though I don't approve Lovegood's notions at all the more for that.

Wisch. Indeed, Sir, if you wish to know more correctly "my opinion, what a Christian is bound to believe, with respect to the Scriptures, I am not afraid to answer, that the books, which are univer-

* See Priestley and other Socinian writers, *passim*.

sally received as authentic, are to be considered as faithful records of past transactions.”—“No Christian is answerable for more than this, the writers of the books of Scripture were *men*, and therefore *fallible*: but all that we have to do with them, is in the character of *historians* and *witnesses* of what they heard and saw; of course, their credibility is to be estimated like that of other historians, viz. from the circumstances in which they wrote, as with respect to their opportunities of knowing the truth of what they relate, and the biasses to which they might be subject. Like all other historians they are liable to mistakes with respect to things of small moment, because *they might not give sufficient attention to them*; and with respect to their *reasoning*, we are *fully* at liberty to judge of it as well as that of other men, by a due consideration of the propositions they advance and the arguments they alledge.”—“And if such men have even communications with the Deity, it by no means follows that they are, in other respects, more wise and knowing than other men*.” This point, I suppose to be proved by the “*lame account* †” Moses has given of the creation and fall of man, having not the means of exact information; so that, to suppose, “the books of Scripture were written by particular divine inspiration, is a thing to which the writers themselves make no pretensions: it is a notion destitute of all proof, and that has done great injury to the evidence of Christianity‡.” As to Paul’s Epistles, therefore, and the other Epistles, I never can admit that the authors of them were immediately inspired for the purpose of writing them.

* See Priestley’s Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever, Part II. Pref. p. xiii. and Let. V.

† Priestley.

‡ Priestley’s Letters, p. 58.

Consid. Well, Sir, this is speaking out with a witness. I don't think one Deist in ten would have spoken more decidedly against the Scriptures. Pray, Sir, if such be your judgment on the Epistles, what are we to think of the Gospels?

Wish. O, Sir, I have no doubt but all the four evangelists, as they are called, were very honest men, and that they wrote the "history of Jesus" according to the best of their judgment; though we suspect their genuine histories have been intermixed with many interpolations: and, it appears, that "some texts of the Old Testament have been *improperly* quoted by writers of the New," who it seems were sometimes "*misled* by Jewish prejudices*." Surely, therefore, it must be owned that "some obscurity" is left in the Scriptures themselves, which might *mislead* readers full of Heathen prejudices, and so left, it should seem, to whet human industry and the spirit of inquiry†; and "the Bereans are commended for not taking the word even of an apostle, but examining the Scriptures for themselves; whether the doctrine which they heard was true, and whether St. Paul's reasoning was just‡." Such, Sir, are the sentiments of all our great divines who have written on this subject.

Consid. Are we then to suppose that the Bereans searched the Old Testament Scriptures under any other idea but that their decisions were definitive? I should have thought when they searched the Scriptures, they referred to them as an infallible guide. If they had only to look into the *lame account* Moses gives of matters, I do not know that

* Theological Repository. See Fuller's Systems, p. 238.

† Lindsey's Apology, ch. 2.

‡ Belsham's Sermon on the Importance of Truth, p. 39.

any thing but confusion could be the result of their diligence.

Wiseh. Well, well, Sir, I cannot give up the point: we must be guided by our reason as it respects revelation.

Consid. Allow me then, Sir, to ask you this plain question, If we are to be guided alone by our reason, while we are at liberty to doubt every word of Revelation; are we to call this Infidelity or Christianity? or is not Deism far more rational and consistent than such sort of Christianity?

Wiseh. O, Sir, we are still believers in the Christian religion.

Consid. Why then, Christian believers are at liberty to doubt the certainty of every truth of Revelation itself; even Jews and Mohammedans believe a part of the Bible, but deny the rest. I beg leave, therefore, further to ask, if this be Christianity what is Infidelity?

Wiseh. Sir, the question is easily answered; some few infidels doubt, whether there ever was such a person as Jesus Christ; and others of them think there is no future state; but we all believe there will be a future state, and that there was such a person as *Jesus, the son of Mary*; but then we do not conceive ourselves bound to believe the story of his miraculous conception, or his pre-existence, as it is called, or the strange inconsistent mysterious doctrine of the Trinity: and, among other "corruptions of Christianity," contrary to what we esteem the *rational* and "the true Gospel of Christ," we reject what is commonly called the doctrine of the atonement: "in every shape, and under every modification of it, it is unfounded in the Christian revelation*." Nor can we believe, that there is

* Belsham's Caution against Popular Errors, p. 15.

any such being as the Holy Spirit. Consequently we have nothing to do with the abstruse notion of regeneration, or, as it is called, "the work of the Spirit; we believe that such sort of expressions are to be taken as *oriental figures*, or as "*tropical language*;" and, that it only means a good disposition. We, therefore, consequently, deny the popular doctrine of original sin*, as there is quite as much virtue as vice in the world: we have no doubt at all, as to the devil, that he is entirely a fabulous character; and as to what is said concerning those who were possessed of the devil, it were irrational to suppose, that it could mean any thing further than that "they were mad, or had hysteric fits:" as to the existence of angels, "though there are *frequent allusions* to it in the New Testament," yet it is, "a doctrine that *cannot be proved or made probable* FROM THE LIGHT OF NATURE;" and what

* Mr. Belsham, in his discourse against what he calls Popular Errors, and from which Mr. Wisehead is now making extracts, speaking against original sin, insinuates, as though we believed in the damnation of infants. "Can he be so ignorant of matters of fact as not to know that the insinuation is utterly false†? I think he must know how universally it is admitted among the people he thus slanders, that the imputation of the first Adam's guilt is utterly done away, by the imputation of the second Adam's righteousness, among all those, who have not sinned wilfully or deliberately, after the similitude of Adam's transgression. We shall presently see other methods adopted, to evade the awful truth of man's depravity, as held forth in Scripture, and evidenced by universal experience; but, I think, the reader will not be a little struck with horror and surprize, when he notes the following extract from the above-mentioned sermon: "*This abominable doctrine [Original Sin] represents the wise and righteous Governor of the universe, as a more savage tyrant, than the most merciless despot that ever cursed the human race,*" p. 19. This is the horrid language of one of those gentlemen who wish to be famed for their moderation!!!

† See "Infant Salvation," an Essay, &c.

have we got to do with the New Testament, while it contradicts the light of nature? Notwithstanding, therefore, the *allusion*, we choose to say, "this is no where taught as a doctrine of revelation. A *judicious* Christian, therefore, will discard it from his creed; and, that, not only as a groundless, but as a *useless* and *pernicious* tenet, which tends to diminish our regard to the omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God, and to excite superstitious respect to, and unreasonable expectations from, *imaginary and fictitious* beings*." When, therefore, we hear how Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness, it was, (for we always talk very *rational*ly in our way,) only an *allusion to a fictitious being*; and the proper, and most *rational* meaning is, that he was fighting with some good and bad thoughts which alternately possessed him; but such were the Eastern metaphors and Oriental figures then in use.

Consid. Then, Sir, might it not have sounded still more *rational* had you made it out that he was fighting with two Eastern metaphors, or Oriental figures? that when the angel spoke to Zacharias about the birth of John, the forerunner of our Lord, he should not have said, "I am Gabriel," but "I am an Oriental figure?" and that it was nothing but an Oriental figure that spoke to Mary on the same subject? and that Eastern metaphors, or Oriental figures appeared unto the shepherds, and sang "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men;" and then again, that our Lord had another meeting of these Eastern metaphors and Oriental figures in the mount of transfiguration? that an Eastern metaphor opened the prison in which Peter was confined, and that an

* Belsham's Caution, p. 21.

Oriental figure knocked off his fetters? that Paul was converted at the sight of these Eastern metaphors? that Stephen saw somewhat of the like sort before he was stoned? and that an Eastern metaphor stood by Paul when near shipwrecked? And if these be not enough, I could give you some further lucubrations on your *rational* way of explaining these Eastern metaphors*.

* The Socinians suppose they have a right to take such preposterous liberties on this subject, because these spiritual existences are described as being "powers and virtues;" therefore they are not real existences, but figurative allusions. We will produce a few more passages where the real existence of such spirits is positively mentioned, and then we shall see how far common sense will befriend them in their rational religion.

Belzebub, the prince of the devils—the prince of the eastern metaphors.

Unto which of the Angels (oriental figures) said he at any time, This day have I begotten thee? Let all the angels of God (eastern metaphors) worship him?

Our Lord cast out a whole legion of eastern metaphors from the man among the tombs, and the same set of eastern metaphors drove the swine into the sea.

"Whether there be thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers?" All tropical language—only eastern metaphors.

Christ "spoiled principalities and powers:" he spoiled eastern metaphors and oriental figures.

The ministering spirits "sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation," these are also to be understood as nonentities or oriental figures.

"The angels (oriental figures) who kept not their first estate."

"There was fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (for an eastern metaphor and his oriental figures)—But enough of this from the New Testament, by way of giving a fair specimen of the wisdom of those who can bestow such high compliments on themselves, and on the rationality of their religion.

A few instances from the Old Testament shall also be given as further embellishments of these *rational* evasions.

An angel appeared to Manoah, foretold the birth of Samuel, and instructed him respecting his education: his appearance was very terrible or glorious; he did wonderously, and in the flame of a

Wiseh. Sir, all our great divines are not quite of the same way of thinking, concerning these matters; for some of them have thought, that St. Paul, when he conceived he saw the vision, was under a

sacrifice ascended into glory. All this was done by an eastern metaphor.

An angel was commissioned to punish Israel with a tremendous plague, when David numbered the people; it is said, "the angel of the Lord stretched out his hand." N. B. Eastern metaphors have got hands; and again, the Angel of the Lord stood between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand. N. B. Tropical figures carry drawn swords. We are further told, The angel of the Lord stood by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. N. B. These standings, and movings, and actings, were all accomplished by an eastern metaphor.

The angel of the Lord that encamped around his people, when he brought them out of Egypt, first stood before them, and then went behind them. Strange, that nothing but a tropical figure should have had such an influence on Pharaoh and all his hosts!

Again, Abraham had a visit from three of these eastern metaphors, and he was so sure of their positive existence, that he prepared an entertainment for them. While the plentiful repast was all in the eastern style; and very properly, for he had to entertain three eastern metaphors. There was also a long conversation held between these eastern metaphors and Abraham, Sarah, and Lot; and we are told of the great care they all took to deliver that righteous man out of Sodom. This is a notable proof what a wonderful book will be exhibited before the world, when their rational comment upon the Scriptures shall appear to illuminate the human mind.

The last instance which we will produce, out of a large variety, shall be taken from the history of Balaam. The ass of the soothsayer was thrice opposed by the angel of the Lord, i. e. by an eastern metaphor, and by this means he crushed his feet against the wall. The Lord spoke to him, as through the mouth of the dumb ass, and thus "forbad the madness of the prophet." What a strange timid ass must Balaam's ass have been, to have been so afraid of a tropical figure; or what stupid asses must those be who, thus interpret the word of God? or what brainless asses we all must be to abide by interpretations so preposterous and absurd? And if this be not sufficient to expose the folly of the sadusaic spirit of the day, nothing is.

temporary derangement; and, perhaps, Stephen might have had a short phrenzy-fit like Paul; and as for the story of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, that has been supposed to be nothing more than the narration of a vision.—or “*scenical exhibition of images upon the mind of the entranced prophet.*”*

Consid. So that it is to be supposed, that Christ slept forty days and forty nights, and afterwards related his dreams.

Wiseh. Sir, such is the way our divines have solved the difficulty.

Consid. Do you mean, by all this, to prove that your system, if it deserve the name, has nothing to do with infidelity?†

* Harwood's New Testament.

† Had Mr. Considerate entered more deeply into the controversy by arguing from the authority of the Scriptures against the sentiments of Mr. Wisehead, according to his new notions of the volume of inspiration, it could have been of no avail; for if men of such sentiments cannot succeed, by quirks and quibbles, and by the aid of the most unnatural far-fetched interpretations, the next business is to invalidate the book itself, agreeably to the samples above given: so that it is impossible to deal with a Socinian, but as you would with a Deist. The arguments, therefore, taken up by Lardner on the Credibility of the Gospels, and again lately brought forward against the Deists by Paley,* will prove the best answers against the Socinian notions of the Bible. And I think those modern perverters of Christianity must know how widely they differ from the primitive Christians as it relates to the authority of the sacred volume. Brevity allows me to mention only some of the expressions during the first ages of the church, as they are to be found in Paley, p. 230—282. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, says, “these things the holy Scriptures teach, and all who were moved by the Holy Spirit.”—“Concerning the righteousness which the law teaches, the like things are to be found in the Prophets and the Gospels, because that

* Though no man has written better respecting the authenticity of revelation, yet few have gone so far in giving up many of the divine truths therein contained.

Wiseh. Sir, we disown the charge, we are not such infidels as to deny the divine mission of Jesus; though we believe he is in himself to be considered "as a mere man, and naturally as FALLIBLE AND PECCABLE, as Moses or any other prophet;* yet, that he was commissioned by the Supreme Being, to instruct mankind in the purest principles of morality, so far as he understood them; for, "though we admit that Jesus taught the truth in a popular way, yet we *very much doubt*, whether, in some instances, he properly and accurately understood it †!!!

Consid. Is this the voice of Mr. Wisehead, or the ghost of some departed infidel, that is uttering such dangerous and profane insinuations against the person and character of our blessed Lord? If this be his just character, what good can we get by following such an uncertain leader? and what can we

all being inspired, spoke by one and the same Spirit!" They are therefore frequently called the divine Scriptures—"the sacred fountain of truth;" and Origen (against Celsus,) declares, that both Jewish and New Testament Scriptures are believed in the Churches to be *divine*.

Novatus says, "That Christ is not only man, but God also, is proved by the sacred authority of the divine writings.—The divine Scripture easily detects and confutes the frauds of heretics;" and he calls them "The heavenly Scriptures which *never deceive*." Further, in all the controversies between the Arians, Athanasians, and the admirers of Origen's platonic notions, however some of them differed from the truths contained in the Scriptures, yet they always acknowledged their decision was definitive: That they were the certain guide to truth, given for that purpose by God himself: "The divinely inspired Scriptures." I therefore observe, that the modern notion of the Bible, as it is now before us, presents us with one of the boldest attacks yet ever made on its sacred authority, and it is unsupported by all writers almost in every age of the Church, nor can they produce in support of such sentiments any other argument than bold unqualified assertions from their own authority. Had they searched into antiquity, they would have been more modest and better taught.

* Priestley's Letters to an Unbeliever, p. 33—36.

† Priestley on Necessity.

expect from the Bible itself; but that it will distract and puzzle the minds of all who read it?

Wiseh. Dear Sir, I am sorry you should be so alarmed, but I only meant to soften matters, by shewing you, that it is no wonder if those well-intentioned men, who became the followers of Jesus, who was a *fallible and peccable-man*, and had only a popular way of preaching what he did not *properly and accurately understand*: I say it cannot be wondered at, if they also blundered, and mistook matters still more frequently than their master.

Mrs. Toogood. Why, Mr. Wisehead, you quite shock me; it appears as though you believed next to nothing about our Blessed Saviour, or that there is scarcely either God or devil—though I don't join in with Mr. Lovegood, and his followers, in running down all man's merits; yet, I am sure, I don't know what we should do without our Saviour's merits also, to make up our deficiencies, after we have done our duty as well as we can.

Consid. Why, Madam, I am not a little alarmed, as well as yourself; for, according to this, almost the whole of Christianity, allowed by reason, is, whether Jesus Christ was a good man or an impostor, and even that is a matter of doubt, for now it seems he is *peccable* as well as *fallible*.

Wiseh. Sir, I think I can make it out, that Jesus was *actually* peccable as well as fallible, though you seem to be so shocked at our "true Gospel," and *rational* notions of religion; and of this, I will give you an instance. He frequently accommodated his doctrine to the vulgar errors of the day: and I have before observed, that *the doctrine of angels and devils was a pernicious tenet, and which tended to diminish our regard to the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent God; and though Jesus was his mere servant, yet "he seems to use the word soul, as*

though expressive of something distinct from the body ; but if he did, which, however, is not certain, *he might do it in conformity with the prevailing opinion of the times*, in the same manner as he applies being possessed of demons to madmen, and speaks to madmen as if they were actuated by evil spirits, though he CERTAINLY *did not believe the existence of such demons* *.

Consid. I think, Sir, you have now done the business completely.

Spitef. Though I hate Lovegood's enthusiasm, yet I think you are almost as far gone in infidelity as he is in enthusiasm. I really did not suppose that your *rational* religion would have brought you to all this !

Wiseh. Sir, I am only "removing the rubbish, which loads and disgraces the foundation †."

Consid. It appears to me, as if you were not only clearing away what you call rubbish, but foundation and all ; but have you done, Sir ?

Wiseh. No, Sir ; I confess there are other erroneous and irrational notions which we equally disapprove : for instance, "The doctrine of an intermediate state, or a state of conscious existence between death and the resurrection ;" this must be "discarded, if we are desirous to regulate our faith by the *standard of reason*, of truth, and of Christianity †."

Consid. Of Christianity ! why did not Christ say to the thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise ?"

Wiseh. O, Sir, but you have not considered the proper *rational* interpretation of that text, as given by our learned divines ; they only just alter the stop,

* Priestley on Matter and Spirit.

† Belsham's Caution.

‡ Belsham's Caution.

and then it reads—"Verily I say unto thee this day ;—thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

Consid. A capital proof indeed this, of the *rationality* of your divines! but do they mean this as an argument or a joke? for, according to this, I might say to a poor man who was half starving, "Verily I say unto you this day ;—I will give you a loaf of bread;" and when, for several days I delay my promise, and he accuses me of a breach of my word, I have nothing to do but to say, he did not understand my stops; and that I was not bound to fulfil my promise for a month after I had made it." And again, if a physician says—"To-day I say; I'll visit such a poor man, ill of a fever;" but still delays till his patient dies, and is accused of cruelty; yet all this arose from their neglect, in not observing to mind where the physician designed to have made his stops: and the same sort of joke, (for I cannot call it argument,) has been played off by your divines, on the words of Thomas, when he said, "My Lord and My God;" as if it was said in a fit of sudden surprise, and meant nothing. The exclamation can, therefore, only be accounted for, on the profane principle of "taking the Lord's name in vain." But it is well known that the Jews, even with a superstitious awe, abstained from mentioning the LORD's name, lest at any time they should take his sacred name in vain.

Wish. O, Sir, if you do not like this interpretation, you should remember, that I have already proved, -that Jesus was both *fallible* and *peccable*; so that, in this respect also, he might be under the necessity ("though I do not think that our Lord or his apostles rightly understood the doctrine of necessity*,") of saying something *he did not believe, in conformity to the prevailing opinion of the times.*

* Priestley on Necessity.

Consid. Ah! Sir, what shocking language is this! Did then our holy Redeemer not only preach lies, but even die with a lie in his mouth? And is all this to prove you are no infidel? Could any infidel upon earth advance a doctrine more abominable and profane? and can you wonder that so many of your sentiments make such an easy transition into downright infidelity itself? But have you any more rubbish to clear away?

Wiseh. Yes, Sir, the obligation of sabbatical institutions.

Consid. Is that rubbish also?

Wiseh. Rubbish, Sir, it is all Jewish rubbish, "that one day should be more holy than another; or that any occupation whatever, that is morally lawful on one day, should be morally unlawful on another; is a distinction unfounded in *reason*, wholly unauthorized by Jesus and his apostles, and unknown in the primitive and purest ages of the church*."

Consid. Why, then there would be no great harm directly as your Doctor, or Mr. Smirking, gets out of the pulpit, if all three of you were to run together to the play-house. But what a wonderful knack you gentlemen have of proving your point, by bold unqualified assertions, provided you bring your *rationality* to support them! According to my reading, however, the abstinence from menial labour that we might devote ourselves to God one day in seven, was ordained from the very creation of the world; and is therefore no new institution belonging to the Jewish economy; and this which also was from the very first, has been as invariably observed through the Christian dispensation. - I am not a little surprised at the quick riddance you make of what you gentlemen call rubbish.

* Belsham's Caution, p. 26.

Wiseh. Sir, I have only followed a great author in our way, in what has been called *rubbish*; and, remember the last thing he mentioned as rubbish was, “the plenary inspiration of all the books, both of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, which he esteems an error, that an *inquisitive* and *judicious* Christian will see abundant reason to discard.”*

Consid. I think that has been plentifully settled already. If the greatest prophet in all the Bible was but a *fallible and-peccable man*, no wonder that we had nothing better than a *lame account* of matters from the rest of them; so that, from the Bible itself, the worst of errors have originated. Millions have positively been misguided thereby. Where one person is set right, at least a hundred have been led wrong, by the same book, and in a variety of instances, and so grossly misguided, as that a mere man is almost universally worshipped as the eternal God; and consequently, such have fallen into the grossest idolatry by the ill-judged language of its mistaken authors. Is not this making out the Bible to be the worst written book in the world, which is only to be understood by a set of the most extravagant and far-fetched interpretations, invented by a set of men, who are pleased to set themselves up as being more *rational* than the rest of their neighbours? But have you now done with your rubbish, Sir?

Wiseh. Not quite, Sir; for another admired writer of ours speaks about some strange and *irrational* notions respecting heaven, as being rubbish.

Consid. What then are our expectations of heaven, and glory to be esteemed rubbish?

Wiseh. Why, Sir, you know there are some visionary notions about intellectual happiness swim-

ning upon the surface of some people's brains, about a heaven independent of a material existence; and as our *reason* will not allow us to suppose there is any existence, but that which is material; so we consequently expect a material heaven, made up at least of some of the same enjoyments we have in our present state. We have no notion of that super-angelic state of happiness which some people are so fond of talking of.

Consid. Then it should seem your notion of heaven is very nearly similar to that of another great divine in the east, from whence the metaphors come, doctor Mohammed, who was also in many other points of your way of thinking; and he was quite as much a believer in Jesus, as a great prophet, as yourselves. Count Swedenburg has also diverted his admirers with the same sort of speculation respecting his views of a material heaven. Sir, will you entertain us a little longer with a further descant on *your* material heaven?

Miss Polly (over hears.) Well, I confess I should like such a sort of heaven as yours best; I should not like to be psalm-singing and serving God to all eternity.

Miss Prateapace. And I should like the same sort of heaven as you do, Miss Polly. I should be afraid heaven would be a strange melancholy and mopish place, if we had nothing better than religion.

Consid. But, ladies, I hope you won't interrupt Mr. Wisehead in giving us a further description of his expected heaven; I rather suppose he'll make it out to be a very curious place.

Wiseh. Sir, though you seem to ridicule my notions of a future state; yet I shall not be afraid to give you a full view of the happiness expected after the resurrection by those of our denomination, in

the words of one of our *wisest* and most *rational* divines: "The change of our condition by death, says this author, may not be so great as we are apt to imagine. As our *natures* will not be changed, but only *improved*, we have no reason to think that the *future world* (which will be adapted to our merely improved nature) will be *materially different from this*. And indeed why should we ask, or expect any thing more? If we should still be obliged to provide for our subsistence by exercise, or labour; is that a thing to be complained of by those who are supposed to have acquired fixed habits of industry, becoming rational beings, and who have never been able to bear the languor of absolute rest, or indolence? Our future happiness has with much reason been supposed to arise from an increase of knowledge. But if we should have nothing more than the means of knowledge furnished us as we have here, and be left to our own labour to find it out, is that to be complained of by those who will have acquired both a *love of truth*, and a habit of enquiring after it? To make discoveries ourselves, though the search may require time and labour, is unspeakably more pleasing than to learn every thing by the information of others. If the *immortality* that is promised to us in the Gospel should not be *necessary* and *absolute*, and we should only have the *certain means* of making ourselves immortal, we should have much to be thankful for. What the scriptures inform us concerning a future life is expressed in general terms, and often in figurative language. A more particular knowledge of it is wisely concealed from us."*

Mrs. Toog. 'Las, Sir, I think you must be of the Sadducees' religion; for when I was reading the

* Priestley's Sermon on the Death of Mr. Robinson, p. 18.

psalms and lessons the other day, I minded how our Lord contradicted the wicked notion of the Sadducees about heaven; how that we then shall "neither marry nor be given in marriage, but be as the Angels of God."

Wisch. Our great divine, madam, has not settled that point; but the business about angels has been completely settled; they are only *allusions to imaginary beings*; so that the *fallible and peccable man Jesus, either through ignorance mistook, or through design misled, the people into one of the popular errors of the day.*

Mrs. Toog. Why, Mr. Wisehead, this talk is as bad as common cursing and swearing.

Consid. I think, madam, it is much worse than common cursing and swearing; for what is said on these occasions to prove our blessed God and Saviour was a *fallible and peccable man*, has been done after the most mature and deliberate consideration; and such serious charges against him must be the most blasphemous and profane; while, at the same time, it is urged, from those who pretend to serve a fallible and peccable man as the great prophet of the Christian church. I should certainly prefer reason to the Bible, if it can be proved that such a man who has *wilfully and deliberately deceived the people, contrary to his own judgment*, is supposed to be the principal character of that book. I am sure, that downright Deism is much preferable to such sort of Christianity; but, I think, you are now nearly arrived at the end of your journey; nothing is left but that you should positively deny the miracles of our Lord, and the resurrection, which, in my opinion, is still more beyond the reach of reason than any other doctrine of revelation; and then you will be as complete a Deist as Hume, Gibbon, or the blasphemous Tom Paine.

Wisch. Why, Sir, I hope you do not think me so far gone from the Christian religion as all that?

Consid. Why have not the Jews themselves acknowledged that you have renounced the Christianity their soul abhors? * and are not infidels your admirers? Thus, while we are left to the mere guidance of reason and nature, see what we get by attempting to correct the supposed errors of the Bible: and into what a labyrinth we are led by attempting to bring that book to our reason, instead of submitting our reason to the Bible. But while you conceive yourself at liberty thus to triumph in the powers of reason over the truths of revelation, let me ask you, how far you can further triumph on the effects of such preaching over the hearts and conduct of the multitude of notorious sinners that abound in our land?

Wisch. Sir, that is not our fault, but the fault of those who won't come to hear our ministers. Though we are sure our religion is *rational*, yet we lament it is not *popular*. But I hope, Sir, we shall always make it evident, that we have too much respect to our characters to court the applause of the vulgar, in order that our ministers may be registered among the *popular* preachers of the day.

Spitef. Well said, Mr. Wisehead. Though I don't like you in all points, yet I do in this. I should be ashamed to be followed by such a mob as have taken to run after Lovegood, for the sake of hearing his *extemporaneous rant*. Why, they say his parish is made like a horse fair on a Sunday, by a set of people gallopping after him from every quarter.

Consid. Ah! Mr. Spiteful, you never need fear the contempt of being a popular preacher!

Wisch. A wise and judicious preacher never can

* See Levi's Letters to Priestley.

expect to be popular, as the common people are not likely to understand him. I don't think it is a proof that a man is a good preacher because he is popular, or that a man is a bad preacher because he is not followed by the inconsiderate multitude.

Consid. What then, is it a sign that a man is a good preacher because he has scarcely any one to hear him? and is a man a bad preacher because he is well attended? Pray, Sir, what is the end of preaching? I should suppose, to instruct the ignorant. But if the ignorant can't understand the preacher, and will not even give him a hearing, because of his supposed wisdom and learning, where can be the good of it. It is said of our Lord himself, that "the common people heard him gladly:" and no wonder at it; "for he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes:" and it is said of the preaching of John the Baptist, that "Jerusalem and all Judea, and the regions round about went after him." Were they bad preachers because they were popular? Is not that man the best preacher who does the most good? The question therefore has not been answered, but rather evaded, as it respects the utility of such a mode of preaching.

Wish. Really, Sir, our Doctor and Mr. Smirking do their best endeavours, and if they have not been successful in reclaiming the vicious from the error of their ways; yet we hope that others who are already virtuous are kept in the ways of virtue.

Consid. It should seem, then, that your way of doing good, is that you do no harm; and it would be strange indeed, if by all your lectures against the deformity of vice, and on the beauties of morality, the people should lose the little they already possessed. But when you talk of the best endeavours being exerted, why is it that they are exerted

all in vain, as it respects the salvation of man from sin? I think, Sir, I can tell you the cause of it. All Bible truths and Bible language are kept out of the question. Of what avail was all the moral philosophy among the heathens? and of what avail is all the heathenish bare-weight morality among too many professing Christianity in the present day, where the preaching of the Gospel, which alone is "the power of God unto salvation," is omitted?

Wisch. "The power of God unto salvation!" Upon my word, Sir, that sounds like a very odd expression. What am I to understand by it?

Consid. Why, Sir, it is one of the odd expressions found in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; but as those epistles are so low in your esteem, no wonder that such expressions sound in your ears so odd and uncouth. But in my opinion, it is an expression of peculiar wisdom, dignity, and strength. I am not afraid to assert it, that all true religion is nothing less than the power or influence of God himself on the heart. And must there not be a principle before ever there can be a practice? can any persons be reformed before they are renewed? and after all, can much of the preaching of the present day be even called *moral preaching*? How often are we told how much less is required of us in our *lapsed* state than was originally demanded by the law! and how many apologies are at times brought forth to palliate the vices and deep corruptions of the human mind! Is this preaching morality, or the quintessence of antinomianism? *

Wisch. I really think, Sir, you strain matters a deal too hard, and that your ideas are much too gloomy as they respect the human race. That there

* This expression is derived from the Greek, and means that which is *against the Law*.

are some among whom the protuberances and excrescences of vice are very predominant, we cannot but admit: but still I suppose it is the virtuous habit that principally prevails, and we should not depreciate the virtues of mankind on account of their vices. A great divine of our denomination has given it as his opinion, that "there *may* be a considerable preponderance of virtues even in characters justly estimated as vicious: and likewise that the *quantity* of virtue in the world *may* far exceed that of vice; though the *number* of virtuous characters *may* be less than that of vicious ones:" and again, "few characters are flagrantly wicked; and perhaps, *even in the worst of men*, good habits and actions are *more numerous than the contrary*." Certainly they are so in the majority of mankind, and preponderant virtue is almost universal;"* and if there be a small degree of troublesome vice in the world, another able divine, who is the glory of our denomination, in a very learned treatise he wrote on the doctrine of necessity, has settled the business completely, by proving that "God is the author of sin, and may do evil, provided good may come."†

* Belsham's Review of Wilberforce, p. 39.

† On Necessity, p. 117—121. Now would any one think it, that those very people who have taken such an astonishing alarm at the frightful doctrines of Calvinism, have actually found their refuge in the sentiments of the worst of infidel philosophers, making it out, that God himself is the author of sin; and that is their way of getting rid of what God has revealed, that he "made man upright," but man has "sought out for himself many inventions." Thus, by contradicting the Bible account of the fall, which lays all the evil of sin to the charge of man, they bring it home against God himself, with this reserve only—provided that good may result from it in the end; which is making the Divine Being to speak and act like the worst of men, who say, "Let us do evil that good may come;" whose damnation is just. Let such a deity be adored by these sons of *reason* as long as they chuse; but let my wisdom lie low before the altar of revelation.—"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help."

Consid. Why, then, vice is not only to be little thought of, but seems almost allowable, provided, according to your conceit, virtue preponderates; or according, I must call it, to your blasphemous proposition, that God can be the author of evil. But can you for a moment suppose that the least vice should be admitted before our most holy God, when it is said, "that for every idle word man shall speak he shall give an account thereof at the day of judgment;" yea, that he will bring "every thought into judgment?" as every lascivious thought before him is adultery, and every angry thought not less than murder in his sight. Shall we try how this rule will bear between man and man? Suppose Mr. Dolittle, our Justice, were to say of the thief when brought before him, He generally pays for his goods as he purchases them, though now and then he is under the necessity of stealing to make his payments good: so that when he acts the part of a knave, it is with an honest and virtuous design. Therefore, we must not be too severe with him; for he is an honest fellow, on the whole; and his honest actions outweigh his thievish ones. And again; should the mad drunkard say, I never get drunk above twice in the week, and then all the rest of my time I am very sober: surely, you'll not call me a drunkard upon that account, as I hope my sober fits are more than my drunken ones. Or shall we suppose the common reprobate to plead his cause, by saying, I don't swear near half my time, and these are but thoughtless words; and words can hurt nobody: and let me swear ever so often, I say more good words than bad ones, and scarcely ever neglect *saying my prayers* before going to bed. Now should we suppose, for the sake of argument, that there is more virtue than vice in the world, which I really doubt, notwithstanding your low notions of virtue being no

higher, as far as I can make them out, than a little morality or good manners, or just and civil behaviour between man and man; yet are you not alarmed at your own sentiments, that the same sort of ideas of justice is supposed to exist in God, as would turn all things into confusion among men? Such however, have been the dreadful effects of lessening the eternal obligations of the law, in order that we may obey it just so far as we like best; and such are the *antinomian* principles of all the pharisees and formalists on the earth.

Spitef. Sir, Though I cannot altogether go with Mr. Wisehead, yet your strict notions of religion are enough to drive us all into despair. I am for just such a religion as Mr. Archdeacon Smoothtongue preached to us before the corporation the other day. You remember his text, Sir;—"Men shall be lovers of their own selves." I am sure, Sir, it was an admirable sermon.

Wiseh. Yes, Sir, I admired it much. I thought it an excellent *rational* discourse; for though I should not like to be a conformist to the established church, by subscribing to the "horrid dogmas of Calvin," which are to be found in such plenty in the Articles and Liturgy of the Church of England; yet I am not such a bigot as to neglect an opportunity of hearing a good sermon in either church or meeting.

Spitef. We had better not touch upon that point, Mr. Wisehead; as that would bring on a controversy which, I am sure, we should not end to-night. But I know all you Dissenters are of opinion, that none but Lovegood's followers give us the true meaning of the doctrines of the church of England; but this is thinking very hard of the clergy.

Wiseh. Sir, I confess this is the universal opinion among all Dissenters; but I should not wish to touch you in a sore place.

Consid. From what has transpired this evening, it would be rather dangerous, in my opinion, to touch Mr. Spiteful in any of his sore places, as at times he is very apt to wince; but, I must confess, I differ with both you gentlemen very widely, respecting the goodness of Mr. Archdeacon Smooth-tongue's sermon. First, I think when a man takes a text, he should explain the meaning of it. Now that text, as it stands in the Bible, evidently was designed to shew the evils of self love, that it is a vicious principle in itself, and productive of evil in all its consequences; whereas the preacher turned it right about, and made it speak for a doctrine, which, according to the word of God, it was his duty seriously to oppose.

Spitef. Well, Sir, and did not the Archdeacon say that the *extreme* of self-love might be a vicious principle, though *in moderation* it was necessary for the benefit of mankind?

Consid. Yes, Sir, I heard all he had to say, and with a considerable degree of attention: but really, I believe it will be with some difficulty that I can be persuaded to give up a point, on which the interest of holiness, and the glory of God so much depend. In my opinion the ultimate end of every action should arise from a supreme love of God; and all subordinate love to ourselves and our fellow creatures is vicious and corrupted, but as it centres in our love towards him: likewise all the wickedness and oppression there is in the world arises from this corrupted principle of self-love. When men love themselves, independent of God and godliness, they must be little better than devils in course. Such; however, is the avowed principle of that thorough-paced French infidel, Volney; and in order to make the world twenty times more wicked than before, he has re-

duced it to a system : and we all know what has been the result of that doctrine in his own nation at large. To speak plainly, I look upon it, that such sort of preaching is nothing better than infidelity in disguise ; and as a proof of it, how nearly the Arch-deacon appears to be of the same stamp, I don't know that he quoted a single passage out of the Bible after he had taken his text.

Wish. O Sir ! you know there are a great number of expressions in the Bible that now sound in these *modern* days of Christianity, very barbarous and uncouth ; and I really think, that those gentlemen who have the care of educating the young men of our denomination for the ministry, do well in advising them not to *interlard* their sermons with too many texts of Scripture, as it could not but prove greatly detrimental to the elegance of their compositions ; and if we can but reform the depraved taste of the day, by attending to our compositions, we have no doubt, but that we shall be as popular as any of our opponents.

Spitef. Really, Sir, I am afraid you will quite overshoot the mark ; you seem to make next to nothing of the Bible. You are giving Mr. Considerate a sad handle against yourself.

Wish. Why you may be assured of this, Mr. Spiteful, that you never will be able to get the better of Mr. Considerate in point of argument, if he suppose he carries the question by quoting the epistles of Paul and the " histories of Jesus." And I can give you a proof of this, which is quite to the point. A gentleman in the present parliament, and who is also nearly related to the family of the Worthies in this neighbourhood, thought proper to turn author in divinity, and took it in his head to bring forward a long string of such antiquated notions in

religion as are now entirely exploded among all *rational* divines: and as you may suppose, in order that he might support his cause, his arguments were deduced from St. Paul's, and the rest of the Epistles.* Some weakly attempted to shake the ground he had taken, by arguing against him from the same authority: but an able divine of our denomination† stepped forward and did the business completely, by shewing that no conclusive argument could be drawn from a set of letters which were no farther worthy of estimation, than as letters written by good men, who were still liable to err as well as ourselves. Thus he battered down the place of defence, in which our author supposed himself impregnable, and turned him forth to fight us in the open field of *reason* and speculation; and there, I'll assure you, as you may suppose, he *had him* completely; but while you make so much of the Bible, and while you suppose the authors of it were all *inspired*, you'll never be able to deny the truth of Mr. Lovegood's doctrine.

Spitef. What then, am I to believe that all their strange notions of grace and faith without works, are contained in the Bible? that man has no free will; and that if a man be one of the elect, let him do whatever he will, he *sha'n't be damned*; and if he be a reprobate he must *go to hell and be damned*, if he is ever so good, and strives to be saved as much as ever he can?

Madam Toog. O shocking, Mr. Spiteful! Is it possible that any one can preach such bad doctrines as all that?

Consid. Mr. Spiteful, Madam, is fond of high co-

* Wilberforce's. Practical View, &c.

† See Belsham's Review—For a full answer to this pernicious book, and a defence of Mr. Wilberforce, see *William's Vindication of the Calvinistic Doctrines*, &c. 8vo.

louring ; but I perfectly agree with him that we may look into the Bible for sentiments like these, and never find them.

Wiseh. Though I can by no means admit Mr. Lovegood's notions in religion to be rational, yet it cannot be said that he or his followers carry matters so far as you represent them : and as to Mr. Lovegood, I believe him to be a *good-hearted man*, though his sentiments in *theology* so widely differ from mine.

Consid. (To Mr. Spiteful.) Now Sir, I am sure Mr. Lovegood never holds forth justification without its fruits, as you seem to represent him. I myself heard him explain matters quite otherwise, but a fortnight ago : and very much to my satisfaction. He always tells us, that, as there are none righteous, so none can be justified by their righteousness ; and that though we are justified and saved by the merits and death of Jesus Christ only, yet that we are not to " continue in sin that grace may abound." He observed on that occasion that the king never pardons a thief, that he may have a licence to cheat and steal as long as he lives ; and that all such crimes committed after a pardon are deemed twenty times worse than those committed before. Besides, he talks much of the need and necessity of the Holy Spirit to change our hearts : and have you never ridiculed him on that score ? Pray, Sir, what do you yourself think we mean by that doctrine ?

Spitef. How should I know, Sir ? It is strange indeed, that you should ask me about your meaning, as though I should know better than yourself, when you are so fond, with your wife and daughter, of *gadding about* after Lovegood. But I heard that he should have said, but a few Sundays ago, from one that heard him, " Now we conclude a man is justified by faith only, *without the deeds of the law.*"

What do you think of that, Sir? A fine fellow truly, to make such consequential conclusions, while he holds forth such abominable doctrines!

Consid. Why, Sir, it is very unfortunate, that you should have blundered upon the express words of scripture, and suppose them to be the words of Mr. Lovegood, and especially as you have been just vindicating the Bible, I wonder that you should be so ignorant of its contents.

Spitef. Sir, it is impossible. I say it is impossible, (*To Mrs. Toogood.*) Mrs. Toogood, madam, lend me your Bible; (*To Mr. Considerate*) and then, Sir, you shall find them if you can.

Madam Toog. L—d, Sir*; you can't want the Bible, now you have just done playing at cards.

Wisch. Really, Mr. Spiteful, I would not have you put it to the test, for I remember reading some such words not very long ago; and I recollect it shocked me, when I thought of it, what a bad use vulgar minds would be liable to make of such sort of expressions.

Consid. Yes, Sir, I believe you'll find the passage in the third of the Romans; but I don't think we need to be shocked at the consequences of free forgiveness, when it is always connected with the idea of holiness; "that we may live unto his glory who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

Spitef. And I suppose, Sir, that you think the horrid notions of predestination are also to be found in the Bible; but I am sure they are not.

Consid. I am sure they are not as well as yourself, as you have represented them; nor yet where you

* These sort of religious old ladies are very apt to take the Lord's name in vain.

have placed them, in the brains of good Mr. Lovegood. I have heard in the word of God of "an election according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience;" and that "we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son:" but an election *from* sin, that we may live *in* sin, is a doctrine as much abhorred by Mr. Lovegood, as it can be by you. No, Sir! Mr. Lovegood is better taught to distinguish between causes and effects; and he always insists upon it, that the effect of our election is, that we may "live unto God;" and as to his opinion relative to the freedom of the will, I hope we have had enough upon that score already.

Wiseh. I am sure we have Sir: for it has given me such a head-ache, that I have felt it ever since. (*To Mrs. Toogood.*) Can you give me a pinch of your cephalic snuff, madam?

[*The snuff box is handed; Spiteful continues.*]

Spitef. I have no sort of doubt, but that Lovegood knows how to gloss over his abominable tenets. He is an artful fellow; and if all be true, as wicked as any of us,—and no wonder at it, from the doctrines he preaches. There is a fine story gone all round the country about him, and I'll warrant it is all true.

Consid. What is that, Sir? I have heard it reported, that my wife is too intimate with the parson. Is that the story you have got hold of? But instead of being jealous on that score, I wish her to be yet more intimate. I am sure she cannot have a more excellent and instructive acquaintance; and I now mean to go myself with her and my daughters, much oftener than I have done; though, being one of the corporation, I am expected at Mapleton church

more than I could wish.—But, pray what is the story ?

Spitef. Why, have you not heard how *Parson* Lovegood has persuaded a lady to leave her husband; because he would not be converted to his religion, as well as herself; and that she would not live with him, because he was a *carnal man*, according to their *canting* way of talk : while, *madam*, with all her *pretended sanctity*, is *carnal* enough to admit the *parson* to come and see her as often as he likes; and there he keeps her at *Ned Swiggs*, at the Golden Lion; and some say Mr. Worthy, with all his religion, is admitted to pay her the same sort of visits; and that Mrs. Worthy is quite jealous upon the occasion.

Madam Toog. O shocking! shocking! Well, I always thought Lovegood must be a very bad man at heart, from the first sermon I ever heard him preach; for no one, I am sure, could have made out all people to be so very wicked, if he had not been a very wicked man himself: and from that time I was determined *never* to hear him *no* more..

Consid. Why, madam, I think we had all better have been at cards, though it is the week before sacrament, than talk scandal against the innocent; but I have heard, from my wife and others, a very different story than what is now made out.

Spitef. Aye, aye, they give it out that the lady was the gentleman's mistress; and that, when she saw the evil of her ways, by one of Lovegood's *preachments*, she would not live with him any longer; but he swore again and again by his Maker, that she was his lawful wife, and that he would soon prove it.

Consid. You know the old proverb, "they that swear will lie;" and I have no doubt but the up-

rightness of Mr. Lovegood's conduct will soon appear.

Spitef. They may preach up their innocence as long as they like it ; but Mr. Bluster of Revel Hall, knows the family very well ; and Mrs. Scandal, his aunt, says, she could take her oath of it, that it is a fact.

Madam Toog. Yes, and she was going to tell me all about it one morning, when she met me at Friday prayers ; but I had not time to stop to hear it all.

Miss Prateapace. Yes, and Mrs. Tittletattle was at our house the other day to tea, and told us a great deal about it ; I am sure, Lovegood must be a very wicked man if it is true.

Consid. And, I am sure, you are all acting a very wicked part if it is false.

Spitef. False ! how can it be false ? are they not always prating and preaching about faith without works, though you pretend to deny it ? and what can be expected among those who hold such loose notions of religion ? Why, to be sure, a conduct as loose as their religion : every body knows it is all free grace with them, that they may live as they list. I am afraid these abominable fellows will soon overturn both church and state.

Consid. Why, Mr. Spiteful, what can ail you to-night, to run on at this rate ?

Spitef. Why, have you not seen Bishop Bluster's Charge against these mock reformers, proving that, under the mask of a great zeal for religion, they are, notwithstanding, *Infidels* and *Atheists* ?*

Consid. How can you, in your conscience, think

* It seems, a charge not very dissimilar to Bishop Bluster's, made its appearance not long ago.

so, while, by Sunday schools, and every possible exertion, these people are doing all they can for the reformation of mankind?

Spitef. Fine reformers, truly! when, under the pretence of a reformation, their design is by their seditious machinations, to throw all things into anarchy and confusion: and the bishop says, this he knows to be a matter of fact. I wonder government does not stop their progress!

Consid. What! is it a matter of fact, that some attempt to make people infidels and atheists, by directing them to read their Bibles, and attend on the public worship of God? and as to the charge of sedition, malice can say any thing, but stops to prove nothing.

Wiseh. Bishop Bluster, Sir! who is Bishop Bluster? Being a dissenter I am not so well acquainted with the names of the bench of bishops.

Spitef. Why, Sir, he is not only a man of very high blood, for he is cousin german to Mr. Bluster of Revel Hall, but a very learned man, I will assure you.

Consid. As for his learning, that I shall not attempt to dispute; but if a person wilfully, deliberately, and publicly, bears false witness against his neighbours, by urging such cruel charges without any evidence to substantiate the fact, while he can thus directly transgress the ninth command, it is no proof of his integrity: supposing any one should wantonly charge him in return, that he was a common swearer, a liar, a gambler, a Sabbath-breaker, and register him among the meanest of common swindlers, as running into every one's debt, and paying nobody till compelled by law, and all without the least evidence to substantiate the fact, how would he like it?

Wiseh. Though I do not like Mr. Lovegood and his doctrines, yet I do not think either he or any of his sect are quite so bad as you make them out; he certainly is very charitable in his parish. I wonder how he can do so much, for they say his living is but very small; and he has an increasing family.

Spitef. Ah! but I'll warrant it is Mr. Worthy's purse that helps him out; they don't mind their money, provided they can but bribe people to be of their religion.

Consid. Why is it, then, Sir, that you cannot get Mr. Bluster to bribe some people, after the same manner, to be of your religion; for whenever you preach, it seems, yours is but *a very little flock*.

Spitef. I do not mind your sneers, Sir, but I have not half done yet; for there is Mr. Feigning, Mr. Worthy's steward, *a rascal*; and then I have heard a fine story of Mrs. Fairspeech, *a drunken sow*.

Consid. Sir, you need not spend your breath on such subjects: for hypocrites there always were, and always will be; but nothing can be more cruel and unjust, than to charge the crimes of hypocrites on those who are upright and sincere.

Thus Mr. Spiteful was proceeding in the most vehement manner, and in which he would probably have proceeded for a considerable while longer, had he not been interrupted by his servant, who was sent after him from his house at Mapleton to Madam Toogood's, with the following letter:

"REV. SIR,

Wednesday Noon.

With great difficulty, I yesterday came from Revel Hall in Mr. Bluster's chaise. On Sunday after the second service, I went to his house, according to appointment, that I might be present on Monday

at the coursing match. My mare, you know, is rather spirited, and every now and then the young sparks that were there, smacked their whips and gave her a cut; and, you know, if we, of our order, choose to keep company with the great, we must submit to such rubs as these. However so it was, that while we were all on the full speed, on a chace, my mare with the rest of the company, attempted to clear a wide ditch, but missed her aim, and left me behind her. I unfortunately fell head-foremost, and must soon have been suffocated in the mud and water, had not the game keeper, with the assistance of others, with great difficulty pulled me out. It was a fortunate circumstance that the bottom of the ditch was so soft, otherwise I must have been more severely bruised by the fall; but I still feel myself so much hurt, about the neck and shoulders, that I can scarcely sit upon my bed to write these few lines, to request you to undertake my duty for me, till I am recovered; or till the return of my curate, Mr. Brisk, who is gone with Lord Rakish to Gambleton races, and who has some hopes of preferment from that quarter. I expect him to return in about a week or ten days, when I shall release you from all further trouble.

I was engaged this evening to give the sacrament to Mrs. Formal, who is not likely to live many days: if you will call upon her and perform that office for me, you will much oblige your humble servant,

RICH. DOLITTLE.

P. S. I could avail myself of the assistance of Mr. Goodman; but, as I have reason to believe, he has of late had a strong bias in favour of Mr. Love-

good's notions in religion, I should be much afraid to lend him my pulpit."

Mr. Spiteful having read the letter to himself, exclaims:

Oh, poor Mr. Dolittle, he has met with a dreadful fall from his horse, and he wants me to administer the sacrament to Mrs. Formal, who is supposed to be near death.—What can I do? I must go away directly.

Madam Toog. Why, Sir, you are not prepared: you can't go away from the card table to administer the holy sacrament?

Spitef. Well, I cannot help it, I must take it as I find it; I wish I had been at something else.

[Mr. Wishead, twisting his thumbs one over the other, sat and said nothing.]

Madam Toog. But, I hope, Sir, nothing material has happened to Mr. Dolittle: do stop awhile and tell us before you go: if it is not too bold, I should be glad to know what he says of this unfortunate accident.

Spitef. Well, well, as the whole of it must soon be known, far and wide, you may take and read it, if you like.

[The letter is handed to Madam Toogood, and she gives it to Miss Prateapace.]

Madam Toog. Becky Prateapace, my dear, will you read it? My eyes are got very dim, and I don't like to read by candle light. [*The letter is read out.*]

Madam Toog. O, poor gentleman! but Mr. Spiteful, did you not hear of it before you left Mapleton?

Spitef. I heard that he had a bad fall from his horse.

Consid. Hear of it, madam? I suppose it is all the town over by now. But as Mr. Spiteful had so much to say against Mr. Lovegood, I thought I would have the less to say against Mr. Dolittle; especially, as you so much admire him as a minister.

Madam Toog. Why, to be sure, Sir, he is an excellent man in the pulpit.

Consid. A thousand pities, madam, if that be the case, but that he should always be kept in it, and never let out again, when he is once found there. In my opinion, however a bad man out of the pulpit, can never be a good man in the pulpit.

Madam Toog. I am very sorry Mr. Dolittle should have been so let down.

Consid. Why, by all accounts, he has been completely, *let down*, and *let down* more than once on the same unfortunate day; for after the Rector was with some difficulty heaved out of the ditch, neither his hat nor wig could be found for a considerable time, as they were both driven so deep into the mire.

Madam Toog. Dear Sir, I hope the Rector was not obliged to ride home without his hat and wig.

Consid. Why, ma'am, as good luck would have it, there was an old woman gathering some sticks, up and down the hedge, and after she had lent a helping hand to scrape off some of the dirt, she next kindly took her red cloak from off her own back, and put it round Mr. Dolittle's head and shoulders: but as for his riding home, that was quite out of the question, for as soon as his mare found herself at liberty, she took to her heels, and soon arrived at her own stable door at Mapleton: and that first gave the alarm to the town, to see the mare return with her saddle and bridle, and without her master. Be-

sides, had the mare stopped for her master, he was too much bruised to mount her again.

Madam Toog. Poor gentleman, how did he get home?

Consid. Why, if not in a very creditable, yet as it then proved a very convenient carriage. It was in a dung cart, madam, which happened just then to be employed in carrying dung into some of the neighbouring fields.

Madam Toog. O dear! why did they not send to Mapleton for a chaise? or why could not Mr. Bluster have sent home for his chaise? I would have sooner parted with twenty pounds out of my pocket than that he should have been carried in that manner.

Consid. Why, madam, would you have had him to have continued trembling and quaking all over mud and dirt, in the cold till a chaise could have been brought? How could they do better, under such circumstances, than to put the Rector in the cart, and then drive him home as fast as he could bear it? though to be sure, had he been brought home in a chaise, he would have escaped his second let down.

Madam Toog. Dear Sir, what was that? it quite frightens me. Becky Prateapace, reach me my smelling bottle. [*The old lady takes a snift.*]

Consid. Why, you know, madam, calamities of this sort seldom come alone, and so it happened now; for the Rector was first hoisted into the cart and seated on the old woman's bundle of sticks, while she sat on the one side, and Mr. Bluster's servant on the other as his supporters. Thus he rode to Revel Hall, shivering with cold, and groaning with pain, all the time; but, through the carelessness of the plough boy, who drove the cart, which was made to tilt the dung into the field, (not having properly attended to the pin) while they were preparing to heave the

Rector out, they were all tilted down together; and what between the groanings of the Rector, and the laughing of the spectators, to see him and the old woman, with her bundle of sticks, and the servant, all sprawling together on the ground, such a sight, I suppose, was never exhibited in that court yard before.

Madam Toog. I am afraid this will make a sad talk about the town, especially as Mr. Dolittle made such a fine sermon, last Sunday, proving that our clergy were the successors of our Saviour and his apostles.

Spitef. Aye, and all this will be *nuts* for Lovegood and his *schismatical crew*.

Consid. Indeed, Sir, you ill know the character of that good man; no person can be more grieved at the improper conduct of the pretended ministers of the Gospel than himself; and if all acted as he does, I am sure, the blessed cause of Christianity would not suffer half the jeer and contempt it now sustains on account of the bad lives of its professors, especially of its professing ministers, however denominated; and, instead of a set of people belonging to any church, urging the foolish boast that they are the successors of our Lord and his apostles, it would be much more to the point, if they would but preach their doctrines, and imitate their examples. Good and bad there will be of all parties; but these things prove to me, the reality of the Christian dispensation, since nothing but its own native simplicity and purity could have preserved it in existence, while placed in the hands of such teachers, whose lives are so contrary to its holy designs.

[Mr. Spiteful being wanted at Mapleton, rose up in haste, and sought for his hat and cane. The cane

being mislaid, he scolded Madam Toogood's maid, and according to an accustomed expression of his, called upon *the devil** to know where it was, and when found, *trudged off* to administer the sacrament to Mrs. Formal, as fit for the office as was another of the same stamp, who was called from a puppet shew on a similar occasion. After this the rest of the company speedily dispersed.]

* A very favourite mode of speech with Mr. Spiteful. See the Anti-Jacobin Review, *passim*.

The reader may easily judge from this hint and from the spirit and temper of the Rev. Mr. Spiteful, who had a deal of leisure time, that he was a very great scribbler for the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, the *Orthodox Churchman's Magazine*, the *Porcupine*, and some other publications of the same stamp; and any one may, naturally suppose, from the low and scurrilous style of his conversation, that his productions were greatly admired by all the editors of that class of periodical publications.

DIALOGUE XVI.

—*—

BETWEEN MR. WORTHY, MR. LOVEGOOD, EDWARD, AND MRS. CHIPMAN.

—*—

MORE NEWS FROM LOWER BROOKFIELD, PROVING THE EFFICACY OF THE GOSPEL ON THE VILEST OF SINNERS; OR, THE EVILS OF SEDUCTION DELINEATED.

EDWARD, the landlord of the Golden Lion, whose conversion was noticed in a former Dialogue, comes to Mr. Lovegood, and begs his advice.

Edward. Sir, if I don't interrupt you, I should be glad to lay before you the case of an unfortunate, but, I believe, a really penitent young woman, now at our house.

Lovegood. You know, Edward, I always love to attend to every circumstance relative to poor penitents.—Sit down, and tell me your story.

Edw. Well, Sir, you may have heard that a gentleman, at least by his looks, took lodgings, at a private house in our village, with a very fine gay looking young woman, and every one thought she was his wife. They came about a fortnight ago to our church; and, a few days after that, she came to our house in much distress, and without the gentleman with whom she lived. This made me think it necessary to tell her, that we were very cautious who we took into our house, and then pointed her to our rules. She looked at a few of them, threw herself back in the chair and quite fainted away.

Mrs. Loveg. Oh! my dear, how I was struck, at

her appearance, when she first came to our church ! You no sooner began to preach, than she was all attention ; and was oftentimes melted into tears ; and, since then, though she has come without the gentleman, she has constantly attended ; even last Wednesday she was there at the lecture, though it rained so hard. I cannot but hope, that God has sent a signal blessing home to her heart ! how thankful I am, that the Lord continues to make your ministry such a blessing among us.

Loveg. Why, my love, you know I have often said, that, independent of the preacher, however feeble his abilities may be, nothing is attended with such a glorious efficacy as the simple preaching of the Gospel of Christ. (*To Edward.*) But, Edward, what is her story ?

Edw. O Sir, she tells me the most affecting story I ever heard in all my life : how she was seduced from her husband, by the artful wicked man who has brought her into these parts ; and as soon as she was convinced of her evil ways, he left her ; and she has been at my house ever since, crying and sobbing enough to break one's heart, and when my wife attempts to comfort her, she begins weeping again, twice as much as before ; and says, you have been a faithful wife to a kind and an affectionate husband ; but, O ! what a wicked and ungrateful monster I have been ! She will then ask us if she can do any thing for us, if it was only to work at her needle, stand at the washing tub, or even weed in the garden, as she fears, since the gentleman has left her, she shall not be able to pay for her board ? But, with your leave, Sir, she wishes she may lay her unhappy case before you ; as she much desires your advice.

Loveg. With all my heart, Edward, but it will be necessary to have other evidence, to hear what

she may have to relate on such a story; and I have no doubt but Mr. Worthy, always ready for every good word and work, will attend and assist me with his wise and good advice. I will call upon him to-morrow morning, and send you word directly when she shall attend. But what is her name?

Edw. Her proper name, it seems, is Chipman, though she came into these parts under the name of Lady Dash; but if ever that name is mentioned to her, she cries, O, let me never hear of the horrid name of Dash any more.

Loveg. Well, Edward, in a day or two you shall hear from me again; in the interval present her with this book for her perusal. [Mr. Lovegood gives him "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and retires.]

On the following day she was sent for to Mr. Lovegood's. Mr. Worthy attended: the young woman was introduced by Edward, agitated and in deep distress.]

Loveg. Come in, my unfortunate fellow-sinner, sit down until your mind is a little composed, and tell us of your calamities.

[She falls into strong hysterics, and at intervals cries: O my dear husband, his heart will be broken! O my lovely forsaken babe! what a brute! O my most dear and tender father! what a monster! She afterwards a little recovers, and cries, How can you admit so vile a wretch into your doors? what an ungrateful monster have I been before God and man!]

Loveg. But the vilest of sinners may be saved—Be calm; and let us hear the cause of your distress. [After several attempts Mrs. C. thus begins her story.]

Mrs. Chipman. Ah, Sir, I have grieved the best of parents; forsaken the tenderest of husbands; have

left my dear babe behind me; and all through the pride and wickedness of my own heart, in suffering myself to be seduced by the worst of men.

Loveg. But if you are not somewhat more particular in relating your calamities, I feel it will scarcely be in our power to assist you with our advice.

Chipm. Sir, my father, whose name is Reader, was the best of husbands to my mother, the kindest of parents to his children; and a man of strict integrity among his neighbours. He was, by profession, a school-master in a small town called Locksbury in the West of England; and, being well-informed himself, gave me a good education. But his family afflictions have been very severe: for my eldest brother was born an idiot, my next brother took a very wild turn indeed, and my father does not know whether he is dead or alive, as he went abroad and has not been heard of these four years, and I was the next, and oh, what a wretch have I been!

[She is again too much overcome to continue her story; after she recovers, she is addressed by]

Mr. Worthy. Mrs. Chipman, you may depend upon it, you are conversing with your real friends and best advisers. (*Mr. Lovegood adjoins*)—Yes; and with such friends also as rejoice over you in the depth of all your sorrows; trusting in God, that you are now blessed with repentance unto life.—But continue your story.

Chipm. After my birth, it was near seven years before my mother had another living child; but her constitution having been broken, by different miscarriages, she did not long survive the birth of my sister. Before I was seduced, by that man who has left me to curse my folly, it was my greatest consolation to alleviate my father's sorrows, and to be my husband's joy. And, when but a child, I could, in those days, with the greatest tenderness, wait on my dear mo-

ther till I closed her eyes in death ; and, if all the world had told me, that I should have been such a monster of iniquity I could not have believed them !

Loveg. Yes ; but then you did not know the deceitfulness and wickedness of your sinful heart : you had nothing proposed to you, which was calculated to draw forth its evil propensities into action.

Chipm. No ; nor for sometime afterwards could I have believed that I should have turned out so vile a creature. Though so young as I then was, I cannot tell how much I was affected at my mother's death ; and how I wept while I followed her to the grave ; and afterwards how glad I was to wait on my dear father, who would never marry again because his family was already too large ; and what diligence did I then show, though so young, to my poor brother and my sickly sister !

Wor. And what became of your sickly sister ?

Chipm. Sir, from her birth she continued in an ill state of health ; grew quite deformed ; and, when she was about thirteen years of age, died of a decline. I followed her to the grave, and saw her laid upon my mother's coffin, who had been buried about twelve years before.—Surely I am the most abominable wretch that ever lived upon the earth.

Wor. But we wait to hear more of your story ; especially that part of it whereby you were led into your present unhappy situation of distress.

Chipm. Oh, Sir, the nearer I come to that part of my most vile conduct, the more I feel myself ashamed to relate it.

Loveg. But the more you are ashamed of your conduct, the better we shall be inclined to assist and relieve you. Tell us the whole without reserve.

Chipm. Sir, there lived a young man in our town, whose name was Chipman, he was an early scholar of my father, and from his attention and disposi-

tion, he much esteemed him. He was by occupation a carpenter and joiner, and having an opportunity to do some business for himself, he again returned to my father for some further instructions in drawing and arithmetic. It was from that time a connexion was formed between us. After he was somewhat established in business, he mentioned to my father his attachments and inclinations towards me; and I also was happy to confess my real affection towards him.—O, how it cuts my heart to tell, how my dear father acted on this occasion! He called me his dearest right hand; I was his dear *Jemima*, the name he gave me; his only earthly comforter, after all his most severe family afflictions; but, however ill he could spare me from his family; yet, as he had no fortune to give me, he would not prevent so good an offer for my future settlement in life; as Mr. Chipman was a very sober and industrious man, and advancing in a good line of business. Soon afterwards we were married. [*She again weeps and then adds,*] and I shall never, never forget when my dear father gave me away at the church, after the service, how he embraced and kissed me; then, how he embraced me and my husband both together, intreating him to be tender and affectionate to the best of daughters, and me to be obedient and loving to the very worthy man that was now become my husband!

Wor. By what you have hitherto related, if some parts of your conduct may have been highly culpable, yet we rather feel for you as an object of commiseration than of contempt. But when you have given us a further narration of those circumstances, which have brought you into this present state of embarrassment, we shall be better able to give you our advice.

Chipm. O, Sir, there never lived a happier pair

than Mr. Chipman and I were. For above eighteen months after our marriage, it seemed to be our whole study to please and oblige each other, and when I became pregnant he was doubly attentive to make me the happiest woman upon earth; and how have I rewarded him by my brutal conduct! I have done enough to send the best of husbands with a broken heart to the grave. [*Again her grief is excessive.*]

Loveg. Let not these exclamations against yourself interrupt your story; we serve the God of patience, and with much patience and forbearance we wish to hear you further.

Chipm. About a year and a half after our marriage, that artful vile man, Sir Charles Dash, who has an estate in our parts, though he seldom lives there, began to lay his plans for my ruin. In the midst of his filthy and frothy conversation, I too often gave him a smile when I should have treated him with disgust; though for a while I treated all other familiarities with the abhorrence they deserved. Mr. Chipman, my husband, now began to get into a considerable way of business in the building line; and was frequently called, at a distance from home, to undertake the alterations and repairs of gentlemen's houses in the neighbourhood; and, for a while, I could count the hours with anxiety until his return; until I had the folly to suffer that vile wretch to entangle me in his affections, who took the opportunity to accomplish my ruin, through my husband's necessary long absence from home.

Wor. But this accidental circumstance must be considered as an alleviation of your crime.

Chipm. O no, Sir, for I should have been disgusted at every word he said; and, while I continued for a season, to resist his vile designs, he would laugh at my prudish formality, and ask me, how I could confine myself to be the drudge of a carpenter, when I

had sufficient charms to manage the person and fortune of the first man of pleasure in the land? (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) O, Sir, had I been possessed of the real influence of that religion, which, since then, I have heard you preach, the empty flattery of this vile seducer would never have been my ruin.

Loveg. Had you, then, no religious impressions to guard your heart against the horrid purposes of this artful man?

Chipm. O, Sir, I am sorry to say, they were so faint, that I knew not how, either to answer his arguments or resist his importunities; while on every occasion he would treat the religion of the Bible, with the utmost ridicule and contempt.

Loveg. Then, to the eternal reproach of infidelity, it seems, he ever declared himself to be one of that stamp; and knew that he could never accomplish his vile designs to ruin you and the peace of your family, until he could persuade you that the pure holy religion of the Bible was not worth your minding*.

Chipm. Sir, he was ever telling me, that the injunctions of a strict adherence to the marriage contract, was nothing but an artful design of the priests,

* The reading of Sir Charles was entirely limited to the writings of the modern infidels of the day; from them he had collected the following passages, which he would quote with an air of impious triumph: "The God of the philosophers, of the Jews, and the Christians, is nothing more than a chimera and a phantom." He was *fool* enough to conceive, from another Atheist, that "the wonders of nature are far from proclaiming a God, and that they are but the necessary effects of matter prodigiously diversified;" so that according to these *fools*, there is infinite wisdom, contrivance, and order in dead matter. In the midst of all his wickedness he would say, "there is no means of knowing, whether there be a God or not? whether there be any difference between good and evil?" and, if God be the author of evil according to Dr. Priestley, Sir Charles's notions are nearly right; and a Socinian and an Atheist are no very distant relations. And Sir Charles was so near a brute, he could not bear the thoughts of life without his body; he would therefore say, that "the immortality of the soul was a dogma of barbarians, gloomy and disheartening." The

and calculated only to restrain our natural passions, which all had a right to indulge as they chose best.

Loveg. And could you give credit to all this abominable and beastly talk?

Chipm. Credit to such talk!—O no, Sir; but infatuated by his enchanting promises, and by the splendour of his appearance in life, my ruin was accomplished.—What could possess me to be so beastly and so vile? (*She weeps excessively.*)

Wor. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) As this unhappy young woman has told us the substance of her story, it appears to me, that, notwithstanding her indiscretion in an unguarded hour, it is not impracticable to restore her to her former connexions, and to render her future life a comfort to herself.

Chipm. Sir, it is utterly impossible.

Wor. Why should you say so?

Chipm. I shall be eternally ashamed again to enter a town, in which I must live the contempt, the abhorrence, and the disgrace of all who knew me.

Wor. Yes; but when they see you a humble penitent, the compassions of the people will be excited, and the reproach cast upon your character will, by degrees, wear off.

Chipm. O, Sir, the cruel way in which I treated

only two books on divinity, therefore, he ever read or admired, were, Priestley on Necessity, and on Matter and Spirit; the latter book brought things so nearly to his own mind, that there was no existence but that which is material; that he found one step further, a denial of the doctrine of the resurrection would bring them to the same point; that "death is an eternal sleep." He was highly pleased with the philosophy which taught, that "virtue and probity in private life is but the habit of actions personally useful;" and he was charmed beyond any thing at the sentiments of Volney, that "personal interest is the only and universal criterion of the merit of human actions;" and as to all chastity, as it respects the marriage contract, he would say, that "modesty in the female sex was but refined voluptuousness, and morals have nothing to fear from the generous passion of love." Such were the adopted sentiments of Sir Charles; no wonder that a man of his vile principles was so vile in every part of his conversation.

that worthy man, to whom I was united, after I became connected with Sir Charles, must, for ever, have done away all his former friendship and love towards me; and then the scandalous manner in which we were, in a measure, driven out of the town, and the disgraceful uproar made throughout the neighbourhood by my vile conduct, shame entirely forbids me to relate. O, Sir, I am completely ruined, and must for ever be abhorred by all that ever knew me! But if, by taking in needle work, keeping a school, or by going out to any sort of labour, I can but earn myself a morsel of bread, for I was always used to an active life, I shall most thankfully and willingly submit to it.

Wor. What, then, do you think it would be of no avail, if your father should be written to, informing him, that your connexion with Sir Charles is now at an end? and might he not be a successful advocate with your husband, when he is given to understand, how grieved you are at your past conduct towards him?

Chipm. I can have no objection, that my dear father and husband should be informed how much ashamed I am of my most vile and base conduct towards them. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) But, dear, Sir, if I might, I had rather live on bread and water where I am, than again grieve my dear father and husband by my return; or be removed at a distance from your ministry, by which, through the mercy of God, I have been reclaimed from my most abominable ways!

Wor. Perhaps it will be an encouragement to our worthy minister, if you tell us how your mind was first impressed when you came to Brookfield church?

Chipm. Sir, I am ashamed to acknowledge, that it was very little more than mere curiosity which

first induced me and Sir Charles to come to church ; for, I confess, that public worship had, before then, been too much neglected by me ; and entirely so when I became connected with Sir Charles.

Loveg. I am afraid, then, that a neglect of public worship was one of the causes of your present misfortunes.

Chipm. No, Sir, when I lived with my father, and even for some time after our marriage, we attended public worship, if not constantly, yet more regularly than most of our neighbours ; but, with us, public worship had been brought into very general neglect, for we knew nothing of our non-resident rector, but as he came upon the business of his tithes ; and as for his curate, he was much more noticed as being the best sportsman and the cleverest dancer, than for the conscientious discharge of the duties of his office.—O, Sir, had we been blessed with such a minister as I have found in you, I humbly trust, I should not have been given over to such a wicked course !

Wor. I confess, as you sat at no great distance from our pew. I saw you considerably affected, while Sir Charles appeared not a little irritated and displeased.

Chipm. O, Sir, when I first came into Brookfield church, I was immediately struck with solemn surprise.—It appeared to me, as though I had never been at church before. With us, going to church was nothing but a matter of form, and the few who attended seemed to have little more to do than to settle the visits for the week ; but, as to real devotion, I confess, I never knew what it meant, until I came into your church. O ! Sir, how was I struck to see a country village attended as on a fair day, by people from every quarter, all occupying their accustomed seats, with so much devotion, decency,

and order ; and, how was I further struck, when you and your large family, and that dear worthy man of God and his family, followed to complete the most devout and serious congregation I ever beheld with my eyes.

Wor. But, during the time of divine service, what part of it proved the most impressive upon your mind?

Chipm. O, Sir, when that awful sentence from the second lesson was read against me, with so much solemnity, " Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled ; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge ;"—what I then felt I cannot express ; and it is impossible to tell with what an indignant and contemptuous sneer I was treated by Sir Charles, immediately as he perceived my confusion and remorse.

Wor. No wonder, that a man of his vile-character should treat you as he did, under such circumstances. But was there nothing in the sermon that particularly impressed your mind? for, I think, on that Sunday, our minister, though not knowing your character, was most providentially led to the choice of a text which was remarkably striking, as being so immediately applicable to your unhappy situation. I think the words were these, " Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, yet I will not forget thee."

Chipm. Sir, immediately as the text was mentioned, I was so remarkably struck; that, for a while, in the midst of my confusion, all my recollection failed me ; and as soon as I was a little recovered, I heard Sir Charles muttering in my ear the most cruel taunts and blasphemous invectives, for my weakness and superstition, as he called it. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) But, O Sir, was it possible for me not

to feel, hard-hearted wretch as I have been, when you gave such a character of the monster who could forsake her sucking child, and when that very monster was then before you? (*Mrs. Chipman weeps.*)

Loveg. We esteem all your tears and sorrows, as a matter of thankfulness before God : we trust, what you are now led to feel of the evil and bitter consequences of sin, will prove to your eternal good. But, if Sir Charles behaved so cruelly towards you, even when in the church, I should suppose, when you retired home to your lodgings, his conduct must have been more abundantly cruel and severe.

Chipm. O, Sir, it is impossible I could meet with more than I deserved : it was fit that I should reap the fruits of my own misconduct. How could I expect to be served better by him, when I consider how I had served my husband, my babe, my father, and my God ! But, after we left the church, he first began more in the way of flattery than abuse ; wondering that I was not more upon my guard than to be overcome, as he called it, by the cant of a whining and an artful priest : and that, though I had been exposing him and myself, by suffering my passions to be overcome, by my superstitious reverence for religion, yet that he was still inclined to make me a happy woman, provided I would but follow the dictates of *reason* and *nature*, which allowed and directed every one to be happy in the way that *they liked best*. O, Sir, I am ashamed further to tell you with what blasphemous contempt he spoke against the Christian religion ; and, with what ridicule your character was treated by him, on account of those faithful admonitions which brought home to my heart a conviction of my evil ways.

Loveg. But, I suppose, he soon discontinued his flattery, when he perceived that it was of no avail ?

Chipm. Sir, I was so affected, that I fell down upon my knees; beseeching him to shew compassion to a ruined and most afflicted wretch, who dared not any longer continue a conduct so disgraceful and abominable before God and man. Directly he spurned me from him; swore at me in the profanest manner; treated me in terms the most vulgar and cruel; then called for the servant that waited on us, crying, "See what this d——d religion has done for this superstitious fool: I shall go and take lodgings for three days at Mapleton, and if in that time, she gets rid of her *religious qualms*, she may write a line and send it up to the George; but, if not, I shall leave her to her own superstitious folly; such *whim-ing hypocrites* will never do for me."

Loveg. After this, I suppose you saw nothing of Sir Charles?

Chipm. Yes, Sir, he came the third day down to our lodgings, and at the sight of him I quite fainted away; and thus he has left me the most disconsolate creature that ever lived on the earth.

Wor. Well, at all events, your father shall be written to; it will be highly proper that the good man should know of these circumstances. (*To Mr. Lovegood.*) Will you undertake the office?

Loveg. With all my heart, Sir, as I do not know that the young woman can give us any further information. With your leave, I will retire and write directly, and bring it to your house to-morrow, to see if it meets with your approbation.

Wor. Well, Sir, then I will walk home and expect to see you to-morrow morning. (*To Edward.*) But, Edward, you must not let this poor unfortunate creature want; I shall be answerable for all expenses until these matters are settled.

Edw. Poor thing! she does not put us to much expence: the grief of mind she suffers, almost pre-

vents her from taking any food. If your honour pleases, I shall be very glad to give her all she wants.

Chipm. O what tenderness to such a wretch! this is Christianity indeed! O, that I had known more of such Christianity before I had known that wretched man!

Wor. But, Mr. Lovegood, on an occasion like this, I suppose you will not let us part without offering up a prayer.

[Mr. Lovegood immediately acquiesces, and the following prayer is offered up:

MR. LOVEGOOD'S PRAYER.

O thou God of infinite compassion! we, thy most vile and sinful creatures, approach the throne of thy grace, trusting alone in that mercy of thine, procured even for the chief of sinners, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus our Lord! We have all sinned against heaven and before thee; and, instead of being worthy to be numbered among thy children, we humbly acknowledge how justly we might have been given over to suffer the penalties of eternal death: but blessed be God that we have been brought upon our knees in thy sight, that each may cry for himself, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Yea, and blessed, forever blessed be God, that we are seeking mercy through his atonement, who is "able to save, to the uttermost, them that come to God through him!" And O, most holy Redeemer, thou hast "loved us and given thyself for us;" thy most precious blood is of infinite value for our redemption! thou hast "put away sin by the sacrifice of thyself!" and, thou hast given us the word of thy promise, that "whosoever cometh unto thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out:" and, now with weeping

eyes and broken hearts, we humbly cry, Save, O Lord, save us for thy mercies' sake. And in an especial manner behold the poor contrite sinner before thee; till now ignorant of thee; ignorant of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of her own heart! We lament, how awfully she has been seduced, and misled by the vile treachery of others, and by the corruptions of her own nature. But, lo! the poor penitent now humbles herself before thee, and cries, "Behold, I am vile!" And while she thus repents and abhors herself in dust and ashes, as in thy sight, O, thou most tender witness of the weepings and wailings of her broken and contrite spirit, fulfil thy promise; let thy free forgiving love be her portion, and mercifully prevent her from being overwhelmed by the miseries and sorrows of her own mind! Heal the deep wounds which have been made on her heart, by the hateful and deceitful consequences of sin! restore her by thy blessed Spirit; imprint thy dear image upon her, and bid her go and sin no more. Let thy most merciful pity be vouchsafed to her disconsolate husband and afflicted parent! O that her unhappy departure from thee, might be made the providential event in thy wise hands, of bringing them near to thy blessed self? that all of them, being united to thee, may feel the restoration of that endearing union towards each other, which is the happy privilege of all those who have been blessed with thy love, and tasted of thy salvation. Grant this, most merciful Father, alone for thy Son's sake, our most gracious Mediator, and compassionate Redeemer.

[After this prayer Mrs. Chipman being very much affected, departed with Edward to the Golden Lion; Mr. Lovegood retired to his study to write to Mr. Reader, and Mr. Worthy went home to Brookfield Hall.]

DIALOGUE XVII.

MR. WORTHY AND MR. LOVEGOOD.

THE STORY OF MRS. CHIPMAN CONTINUED.

THE day following Mr. Lovegood waited on Mr. Worthy with the letter designed for Mr. Reader; this, having met with his approbation, was immediately sent by the post to the disconsolate parent of the unhappy Mrs. Chipman. A copy of which I have next to present the reader.

“SIR,

“Though I truly sympathize with you in the loss you must have sustained, by the unhappy elopement of your daughter from her husband; yet, I can bless our most merciful God, that I have it in my power to relate to you a circumstance which, I trust, will be a considerable alleviation of your distress. Sir Charles Dash, the gentleman by whom your daughter was most cruelly seduced, thought proper to rest a few days in the pleasant vale, in which our village is situated, in his way to Scarborough. During his stay here, I fear no better principle than mere curiosity led him to the church. In the progress of my duty, being minister of the parish, that chapter was read in which are these words, ‘Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;’ and, in the course of my sermon, without knowing any thing of the characters who attended, I made some observations, which have been so impressed upon her mind, as to produce, I humbly trust, that ‘repentance which will never be repented of.’ And being thus convinced of her evil conduct, she re-

sently became the object of perfect hatred to the man by whom she had been so treacherously misled; and he has now most unmercifully left her a stranger, in a strange country, without a shilling for her subsistence: such have been the effects of his brutal love, and such the unhappy state to which your daughter has been reduced thereby. One alleviation, however, of her sufferings is, that she is in the hands of those, who, having obtained mercy from God our Saviour themselves, love to manifest the same to others. A most respectable gentleman, of an ample fortune and a liberal mind, has, for the present, engaged to supply her wants, and has employed me to enter into this correspondence with you, that we may know how far it will be practicable again to restore her to her family connections. She has already communicated to us the principal circumstances of her former situation in life; and, while justice demands it of me, I am happy to observe, that it is impossible for any one to discover greater tenderness of mind or deeper contrition of spirit. She cannot speak of you, dear Sir, but a flood of tears immediately bursts from her eyes, while she execrates her vile ingratitude to the best of parents, and a parent also, whose family afflictions have been so severe. The like character she also gives of her affectionate and attentive husband, and has not language to express how she abhors herself for grieving the heart of one so worthy of her affections, for the sake of another in every point of view so worthless and so vile. Being myself both a husband and a father, I know what I must have felt, had it been my unhappy lot to have met with such an afflictive dispensation in my family; it is, therefore, with the greater tenderness, that I can sympathize with you. But, dear Sir, may I hope and trust, that it will not be in vain to request you to bestow forgiveness on your once most obedient, though

afterwards ungrateful, yet now, truly penitent and afflicted daughter; whose heart is so severely broken, that it truly breaks our hearts to behold her daily and nightly griefs: and, indeed, she is so completely overwhelmed with shame and remorse for her sins, before God and man, that it is a question with us, if she can long survive the sorows of her own mind. For the sake, therefore, of that blessed Saviour, whose mercies are so free to the vilest of our penitent race, pass by those unguarded hours of your daughter's life; let the principal blame rest upon the head of the vile seducer, and restore to your recollection what she was in her chaster days, when it was the joy of her heart to shew the most filial obedience, and affectionate attention to a parent she still so dearly loves, and so highly reveres. I confess, I find it is to me a much greater difficulty to decide, how far it becomes me to be her advocate with her husband as well as with her father. She confesses the bond of her marriage connexion is dissolved; and she humbly acknowledges, that were she doomed to spend the residue of her days in a state of the most pensive widowhood, it would be the least punishment she deserves; nor can she ever suppose herself again worthy to embrace her dear child, which she unnaturally left when it still needed the fostering care of a mother's arms.

“ Under these considerations I determined, that it might be the most prudent step not to correspond with her husband, but with her father, on this most unhappy event; and to leave you to converse with your son-in-law, and then to transmit your answer to this address. I have already mentioned, that almost every circumstance, relative to this unhappy affair; has been communicated to us by her; but an event, about a public disturbance, which, she says, originated in her misconduct, and, on account of

which, she conceives she will be for ever forbidden to make her appearance any more in your neighbourhood, she has not fully explained. If you think it proper, confidentially, to relate the particulars of that event, you may depend upon it, the only advantage I shall take of it will be to exert myself still further to assist and console, by every effort in my power, a poor unfortunate young woman, originally dear to you, by the purity and simplicity of her affectionate obedience, and now not less dear to me, as an humble penitent won to God our Saviour by the ministry of

May 1.
Lower Brookfield,
near Mapleton.

“ Your unknown friend,
“ and servant, for Christ’s sake,
“ BENJAMIN LOVEGOOD.”



About a fortnight after the above letter was sent, Mr. Reader returned the following answer :

“ REV. SIR,
“ I conceive myself unutterably obliged to you, for your very great kindness and attention manifested towards my unfortunate daughter. No doubt, but you find yourself sufficiently repaid by the approbation of your own mind, for the great goodness you have testified on this occasion, while you have still to look forward to a future day, in which you will receive a full reward at the hands of the Almighty for that uprightness of heart you have manifested towards one, that I thought might have been sufficiently guarded from such evils, by the virtuous principles, which, from her childhood, I conceived it my duty to impress upon her mind. Amidst the deep grief I have sustained at the revolt of my dear child, from the paths of virtue and morality, I

am happy she is now convinced of her error ; and sincerely pray, that she may abide by the good resolutions she has been able to re-assume. I at once submit, kind Sir, to the requisition you make on my daughter's behalf. Assure her, therefore, that I freely forgive her, and shall again receive her, without the most distant token of my displeasure, as I trust her repentance has proved a sufficient *atonement* for her crimes : and, indeed, her former good conduct, before she was seduced by that wicked man, ever gave me such evident demonstration of the *natural goodness of her heart*, that it were highly uncharitable, not to suppose that her repentance is sincere ; these unhappy days of her folly and indiscretion, I shall therefore bury in eternal oblivion. Assure her, therefore, I shall be much grieved and affected, if the unhappy *fracas*, which, she says, she is ashamed to relate, should prevent her from accepting this, my affectionate invitation for her return ; and, as you wish to understand that circumstance, I am free to relate it. My worthy son-in-law, a man of most excellent natural inclinations, who had unfortunately too much proof of the evil propensities of my daughter, from her uncivil and unkind behaviour, by first thwarting him upon all occasions, and then embracing every opportunity to receive the addresses of Sir Charles, had soon too much reason to suspect his vile intent. He therefore for once feigned a necessary absence from home on his business, and returned at an unexpected hour. By this stratagem, he detected that wicked man in his abominable designs : and not having sufficient property to avenge himself in course of law, can you wonder, Sir, if Mr. Chipman should have exceeded the rules of moderation in the revenge he was excited to take against the man, from whom he had received such cruel injuries ? Armed with horse.

whips, he and one of his men, by force entered the chamber, where they discovered my daughter and this libidinous wretch : thus armed, they gave him one of the severest flagellations man could well receive. But could it be severer than such a brutal and treacherous conduct deserved at his hands ? Being thus driven out of the house, he was followed with no less severity through the town. He was thrown into the kennel by a mob of children in the streets, while the people at large eagerly testified their approbation of Mr. Chipman's method, if not of legal, yet of laudable revenge, in their general out-cry against a man so deservedly detested, as the destroyer of the peace of one of the most happy families in the town. At length, however, Sir Charles, with great difficulty got to his lodgings ; soon afterwards he was followed thither by my daughter ; they both made an early elopement together the next morning, and, after that, what became of them was a matter entirely unknown to us until your letter was received.

“ As, with much delicacy, you ask my advice, how far it may be practicable to attempt a reconciliation between my daughter and her husband ; so I find as much difficulty in giving my advice. You say, my daughter is so true a penitent, and is now so deeply affected at her past offences, that you have your fears, whether she can survive her grief ; and it much concerns me to observe, that the revival of her affection to her husband, must be attended with additional grief to her mind, when she is informed, that Mr. Chipman has been so deeply affected at this unhappy event, that he sunk under melancholy and dejection of spirit. This brought on a bilious fever, which, for several days, we thought would have terminated in his death : and, though he is recovered from the most dangerous crisis of the disease,

yet, I fear, the effects of it he will not long survive. He has no spirits left; his business he totally neglects; and, whenever he thinks of my daughter, or beholds the dear little infant she has cruelly left behind, he is again overwhelmed with grief and floods of tears; and though I and Mr. Fribble, the curate of our town, do all we can to divert him by reading the news, or by an innocent game at cards, I fear, that detestable seducer will be the death of one who, I believe, was naturally as *good-hearted* as most that are to be met with in the present day.

“Think, kind Sir, what a painful task it was to me, to read your letter to my son-in-law, in a state so debilitated and weak; and, though I did it with all possible tenderness and attention to his feeling mind, yet it opened the sluices of his affection beyond what I can possibly express, and it was with much difficulty, that at length, he cried, ‘Tell my wife, I freely forgive her; but, though a dying man, how can I forgive the wretch, who has destroyed the peace of my mind, and torn my darling from my bosom!’

“I leave it with you, Sir, to break these painful circumstances to my unfortunate daughter as you may judge best. So far as her conduct has been a grief and injury to me, again I repeat it, I freely forgive her from the bottom of my heart; but, from the declining state of her husband’s health, I have deferred writing for above a week. I fear he will soon forget all his sorrows, in being speedily laid in the silent grave. He is, however, a man naturally of a very good mind, and is now endeavouring to fortify himself against that solemn event, by *making his peace with God*, according to the best of his ability and knowledge. I am, Rev. Sir, with many thanks, for your great kindness and attention to my daughter,

“Your most obedient humble servant,

Locksbury, May 15.

“JAMES READER.”

Immediately upon the reception of the above letter, Mr. Lovegood consulted Mr. Worthy how they had best act upon it. They not only had to lament the strange dark conceptions of Mr. Reader's mind, as it respected his knowledge of the Gospel, though in himself a well-intentioned man, but were very apprehensive of the effects it must have on Mrs. Chipman's feelings. They were both, however, of the same judgment, that the contents of the letter could not be kept back from her, whatever painful sensations might be created thereby.

They conceived also that a second interview similar to the former, would be more painful to her feelings, under this new circumstance of the dying situation of her husband. It was at length judged best that Mr. Lovegood should send her father's letter, for private perusal, together with another letter from himself, preparing her for its trying contents. This he wrote with much tenderness and discretion, begging her to prepare her mind, by prayer and resignation to God, to say on this event, "Thy will be done."

Edward was accordingly sent for and directed how to act, and afterwards to inform Mr. Lovegood and Mr. Worthy of the result. Edward wishing to have some one else in his house, on this occasion, requested Henry Littleworth would be there; who, though once such a profane and dissipated rake, was now the admiration of the neighbourhood, for the wisdom, and goodness, and purity of his life. He, with his sister Nancy, came down, therefore, from Gracehill Farm, that they might be there while Mr. Reader's letter was laid before his daughter: and, as the case of Mrs. Chipman was in some measure his own, he would naturally enter into her feelings with much tenderness and sympathy of mind. The consequences of this interview will now

be presented to the reader, in the conversation which took place at Mr. Lovegood's where Henry and Edward went to report the result of this event.

Edw. Sir, Mr. Henry Littleworth and I are come to tell you how Mrs. Chipman received the letter.

Loveg. Well, and how did the poor creature bear it?

Edw. Why, Sir, at first, as you directed me, I gave her your letter. While she attempted to read it she wiped her eyes several times, admiring your tenderness to such a wretch, as she always calls herself. She then said, By the latter end of Mr. Lovegood's letter, I find you have another letter from my father; and, when I gave it her, she trembled like an aspen leaf. I then begged her to go up stairs and read it by herself. She had not been long there, before we heard her scream violently; my wife and I ran up, and found her in strong hysterics.

Loveg. I was afraid the letter would be too much for her. Her affections having been withdrawn from the *worthless fellow* who seduced her, since the blessed change, which, I trust, has really taken place upon her mind, it is no wonder, that they are strongly restored to their proper object: and the thoughts of his death by her misconduct, I know must be like a dagger to her heart.—But how long did she continue in that state?

Edw. I believe, Sir, it was full half an hour. We desired Mr. Henry and his sister would walk up, while my wife went down to bring somewhat for her refreshment, and when she seemed a little recovered, Mr. Henry went to prayer with her.

Loveg. (*To Henry*) Well, and how did her mind seem after prayer?

Hen. O, Sir, she sat the picture of misery and

grief; calling herself, monster, murderer wretch, and the vilest sinner out of hell. Then I began to tell her, that she could not be worse than I was in my thoughtless days; but there was a precious word of promise given for me and for her, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." "No," she directly cried, "I am chief, and I shall have the murder of my dear husband soon to answer for before the bar of God. O, how I abhor myself, how ashamed am I of this most polluted soul, and, if possible, still more polluted body before God." Thus she went on exclaiming against herself. O, Sir, what misery and mischief has sin brought into the world, and what a mercy, that God ever stopped me in my mad ways!

Loveg. Yes, Mr. Henry, none of us can be sufficiently thankful for the power of that divine grace, which saves from a thousand evils. But could you discover from Mrs. Chipman's conversation, what were her future designs?

Edw. Sir, she could hold no conversation with us whatever. I am afraid she will lose her senses, or her life.

Loveg. Let us hope for the best, Edward. We cannot be surprised at the strength of her feelings on receiving such tidings respecting her poor husband; the grace of God always restores tenderness to the mind. But this, for the present, makes it a more melancholy event; as almost whatsoever is said to her, can have no other tendency than to add to her grief; and, how to advise her, as to the steps she should take under present circumstances, is a most difficult task. Were she to accept of her father's invitation and return home, the sight of her dying husband might be the cause of her death also; for thousands of people have been killed by grief.

Hen. O, Sir, when it first pleased God to awaken me to a sense of my sins, nothing so affected me as the thought, that my vile conduct might have sent my dear parents with broken hearts to the grave.

Edw. But, Sir, if you could come to our house, and say something, by way of comforting the poor creature, we should esteem it a great kindness. We really do not know what to do with her, and she pays great attention to what you say. Till the letter came, about her husband's illness, she began now and then to look a little cheerful; she took a deal of notice of what you said yesterday was se'nnight in your sermon, *as how* God could over-rule the wicked purposes of mankind to bring about the eternal good of themselves and others: though sin was not the less abominable on that account. I dare say, Sir, you remember what you said about Onesimus, who was permitted to rob his master, that he might be brought to the knowledge of the truth. She seemed to take a deal of notice of that observation.

Loveg. Well, Edward, if it be your wish, I shall have no objection. I have an hour to spare, and will go with you directly.

[Mr. Lovegood, Henry; and Edward, walk to the Golden Lion. On the road Edward observes:]

Edw. Sir, I believe I must lay aside public-house keeping. My wife and I think out of our little farm, (you know our squire is very moderate in his rents,) and by making a little malt, we can keep ourselves very well, especially since we buried our last poor little girl; we have but three children now left.

Loveg. O no, Edward, by no means; for, as soon as you give over, some one else will be starting up, especially as the turnpike road lies through our village, and then it is probable that nothing but riot and drunkenness will be brought into our parish, and one public-house is quite enough for this place.

Edw. Why, Sir, did you not hear what a riot we were likely to have had at our house, last Tuesday evening, from a set of drovers that came along this way?

Loveg. No, not I.—I never hear of riots at your house.

Edw. Why, Sir, after I had put their beasts into the field, they came into the house, and began cursing and swearing; and as I thought it might answer best to speak to them with as much good temper as I could, as generally that goes furthest with such sort of people, I told them, that our's was a very regular house; and that for the sake of good order, I thought it best, that we should all swear by turns, and that it was my turn to swear next: and thus we should all prove, one by one, where was the good of it, and what advantage comes by it; therefore, for the sake of good manners, I begged they would stop till after they had heard me swear. One of them having cast his eyes on what I had painted in large letters over the mantle piece, SWEAR NOT AT ALL, directly said, with a great oath, that he should burst if he was kept from swearing at that rate. I then told them, I would do any thing in reason to oblige them, if they would but oblige me; and that made them quiet for a while.

Loveg. Well, if that was the case, your end was answered, and who knows what may be the future good effects of such a testimony against their profane conversation.

Edw. But, Sir, it did not end here; for, it seems, they had been laying wagers as they came along the road, and they had engaged to spend it in drink before they went to bed; and when I told them they could have no more liquor in my house than what was really good for them; for I had not suffered a person to get drunk within my doors for

above these seven years; immediately they began cursing and swearing at me, and abusing my d—d religion, as they called it, in the most outrageous manner. I directly told them, if they did not behave quietly I should go to the gentleman, who was my landlord and a justice of peace, and who would allow none of these doings in our village, and that he would make them pay for every oath they swore. They then began to be so noisy, that I thought I actually should be obliged to send to the 'squire for a warrant; but, at last, after I had promised them a pint of beer before supper, and two pints after supper, as it had been a very hot day, provided they did not swear over it, they became pretty orderly, and one of them suffered me to talk to him very seriously; and I gave him some of the religious tracts our 'squire wished me to put into the hands of travellers that came our road.

Loveg. This is no proof that you should give up your public house; but just the contrary; for had they gone but two miles further, to Mapleton, there, I fear, they might have made themselves wicked enough; at least they were restrained for a while; and now they have heard something they may remember another day. Besides, I am told, that a great many decent sober travellers have lately found their way to your house, for the sake of the quiet and orderly accommodations they find there; and where are the people to go to on a Sunday if you shut up your public house? I am persuaded you are as much in the way of duty in your public house as I am when in the pulpit; and I am sure, your excellent landlord, Mr. Worthy, is of the same opinion. He will never suffer you to pull down your Golden Lion, for a few rubs of this sort.

Edw. But, Sir, had some of my customers hap-

penced to have been there : how I should have been ashamed of myself !

Loveg. Ashamed of yourself—for what ? I am sure, they would never have thought the worse of you, or religion, on that account ; besides, I think I can give you a remedy for this evil, at a very small expence ; wait a few days and see if I cannot.

[The Golden Lion is a little snug clean place, situated on the brook from whence the village takes its name, it had a nice old fashioned porch before the door. Mr. Worthy immediately contrived a plan to adorn the brook with some weeping willows, and the front of this porch in a captivating tasty style, though consistent with its original simplicity, making it still more like a neat summer-house, by sending his gardener to plant some honey-suckles and flowering shrubs about the porch, and on the little green before the door. On a tablet on the front of the porch thus adorned, the following lines were soon afterwards painted :

Let the kind trav'ler of a friendly mind
Step in, and all he wants he here shall find ;
A kindly welcome and a wholesome bed,
A peaceful pillow for a sober head.

While moderation makes the mild request,
He has whate'er he needs before his rest ;
The hostess waits with an attentive hand,
To serve with cheerfulness at his command.

'Tis here the constant law of kindness reigns ;
Her rightful sceptre here she well maintains ;
No sons of midnight riot dare t'annoy
The sweet repose the weary should enjoy.

'Tis here tranquillity and peace combine,
To shed their grateful influence all divine ;
Here Love has fix'd her constant fond abode
For all who love themselves, and love their God.

Thus adorned by the elegant taste of Mr. Worthy, and the poetic genius of Mr. Lovegood, stands the

Golden Lion, in the parish of Lower Brookfield, situate in a vale which exhibits the most enchanting scenery the eye of man can well behold. While it beautifully opens itself to the south, it is screened from the northern blast by a chain of rocky hills, the most magnificent and wild. Here the meandering stream, which afterwards runs through the village and adorns the pleasure grounds of Brookfield-hall, finds its retired channel under a ridge of those rocks, which, in many places project in fine bold perpendicular forms, and which being covered with an abundance of stately trees, the growth of ages, projecting forward in different points of view, exhibit to your imagination the ruins of such ancient castles, as might, in former ages, have filled the world with astonishment and surprise.

This part of the scenery has been in possession of the family of the Worthys for many generations. Other parts of the same landscape belonging to Lord Rakish are not less enchanting, if less romantic; all of them fine rising hills, beautifully broken and richly picturesque. Nearly on the summit of one of them stands the village of Upper Brookfield, while a variety of cottages are found to rest on different broken brows, adding a pleasing vivacity to the neighbourhood at large.

It is to be lamented, however, that this part of the scenery has, in a measure, been deprived of a share of its original beauties: through the extravagance of Lord Rakish, created by a life of dissipation, many a fine wide spreading oak has been felled to the ground. Not so the estates belonging to the family of the Worthys. Throughout several generations, every tree is sure to stand; but as it is cut down for necessary repairs, and its successors are provided for generations yet to come. Durable as the everlasting hills and mountains which surround them, may the

family long survive, while it is of little consequence what becomes of the family of such worthless lords, whose boasted ancestors were, perhaps, only the sycophants of some corrupted court, and whose conduct is of no better tendency than to spread contagion in the vicinage wherein they live.

Which of my readers, whoever he may be, after such a description of the situation of the Golden Lion, and its honest occupier, will not thank me whenever he may travel that road, if I recommend him there to seek his necessary accommodations. There he will find a host truly pious; a hostess neatly industrious and attentive; a clean scoured table, not covered with damask linen, but with a cloth delicately white; a plain, but plentiful repast, neatly served up; and every other accommodation at a reasonable rate, that any man of tranquility and moderation, and blessed with the fear of God, would wish to enjoy. By this design at the entrance of the porch, no such unwelcome visitants, as before mentioned, now presume to interrupt the guests, nor is any thing further heard after the door is closed at the evening of the day, but the still voice of reading the Bible and Family Prayer in a back parlour; while none of the customers are prohibited from enjoying the same privilege with the family, (if they request it,) which they enjoy among themselves. But the reader's attention shall no longer be interrupted from Mrs. Chipman's narrative. The conversation, started by Edward, was scarcely concluded when they reached the Golden Lion.]

Edw. (To his wife called Prudence.) Well, Prudence, how is Mrs. Chipman?

Prud. I think, she seems a little more composed, though she is very low. (To Mr. Lovegood.) Your

servant, Sir, she will be very glad to see you; she often talks about you.

Loveg. I should be happy to do her any service, poor thing, but her situation is so truly perplexing, that I know not how to deal with her; it appears to me as though her life almost depended on every word that is said to her. Is she up stairs?

Prud. If you please, Sir, I'll call her down, as the house is free from company.

[She comes down, faintly trembling, and very hysterical.] After a while, Mr. Lovegood takes her by the hand, and says, My friend pray for submission and resignation to the will of God.

Chipm. O, Sir, how can you call a *murderer* your friend?

Loveg. When you made that unhappy step, you, by no means, intentionally designed to be a murderer.

Chipm. But had I thought at all, what could I have expected otherwise? What a wretch have I been to break the heart of such a man; I deserve to be hated by all who know me.

Loveg. Yes; I admit that your thoughtless moments were the cause of all your present calamities: and then pride and passion, doubtless, prevailed, and rendered you inconsiderate: and no wonder that, when given over to such guides, that such consequences followed. But admitting the charge against yourself, even murderers are not beyond the reach of divine mercy. How justly might you have been given over to insensibility and hardness of heart; but now you are brought to your recollection, you feel your folly.

Chipm. Yes, Sir, and a thousand times worse than folly. O, how it cuts my heart to think what my dear husband's feelings must have been before I could have brought him to such a state. What would I give

to restore him from the grave, if he should never love me any more ! What shall I do ; how shall I act ? Dear Sir ; shall I go directly to him ? If it were in my power to walk on foot, every step of the way, how gladly would I take the journey ; if each step would but bring me nearer to heal the heart of that worthy man, who is now dying through my most vile and ungrateful conduct.

[She is again extremely affected while all present join to mingle the tear of sympathetic grief with hers ; then she adds :]

Chip. But what is become of my dear child ? I hear nothing of him, that innocent miserable orphan, that has, perhaps, by now lost its affectionate father, and has been forsaken by its brutal mother !

Loveg. We have heard nothing as it respects the health or situation of your child ; we trust it still lives, and that your mind will be so composed, as that you may live to bring it up in “ the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Chipm. O, Sir, your text, “ Can a woman forget her sucking child ! ”

[She again gives way to excessive grief of mind ; Mr. Lovegood catches an opportunity, during the intervals of her grief, to add]

Loveg. But should you not recollect, how God can bring good out of evil ; God, we trust, has already accomplished in you the good of repentance, which was indirectly brought about through the horrid evil of seduction.

Chipm. [After some recollection, a little more calm.] Well, well, if ever I am saved, I shall be the greatest monument of mercy upon earth ; but, if God forgives me, I never, never can forgive myself.

Loveg. There are as great monuments of grace already in glory.—Mary Magdalene, out of whom the Lord cast seven devils, Saul, and many others. Hope

for the best. I think, I see a plan of good before us; in all these calamities, which give me reason to believe, that God will get himself more glory by your misguided steps, than might have been the case, had these events never taken place.

Chipm. O, Sir, is it possible?

Loveg. Was ever any thing more glorious than what God accomplished, by permitting the base conduct of Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and Judas Iscariot, to betray, and sell, and crucify our Lord?

Chipm. O, Sir, but these were all wicked, and were punished for their wickedness. And shall I escape?

Loveg. Joseph's brethren, you know, meant evil against him; but God, notwithstanding, overruled it for good to save much people alive: so that, even their evil ways were permitted for their own future good; and you remember, how God brought about matters for the salvation of a thievish Onesimus. Who knows, but your father and your husband may be brought to the knowledge of the gospel, by the same unhappy providence that brought you to Brookfield?

Chipm. O, would to God it might! I think it is that event alone, that will prevent my dying of a broken heart.

Loveg. Well, I have a plan before me, that may, by the blessing of God, be the cause of as great joy to you as present circumstances have made you miserable. You know how unhappily ignorant your father is of the way of salvation, made known in the Bible by Jesus Christ. Poor man, he has no other confidence, but that of a heathen in his own morality: now I mean to send him a very serious letter upon this subject, and recommend him to read some such books as may lead him to the knowledge of the truth;

and, who knows, what a blessing it may be to his soul !

Chipm. And O, dear Sir, do, for the Lord's sake, write upon the same subject to my dear husband : what good can he get from the visits of Mr. Fribble ? Shall I go myself and beg his pardon, again and again, that he may forgive me before he dies, and explain to him the little that I know about the matter, since I have seen my folly, and been made to abhor my ways ?

Loveg. I really think you had better leave all this to others. A meeting of that sort, under present circumstances, would be too much for you both. But are there no serious people about that neighbourhood ?

Chipm. I remember there were a few people who used to meet in some back room, in a lane in our town, and as they were ridiculed, just as you are, I have already thought they might be good people ; but then my father was very much prejudiced against them, and my husband was entirely guided by him in religion. O, dear Sir, what would I give if my father and husband could but meet with some one who knows about that christianity, which has wounded my heart, under a conviction of the evil nature of sin, and has made me to abhor myself for my most abominable conduct.

Hen. Sir, I feel so much interested on this subject, though I am so young in grace, yet I could almost venture to say, I would ask my father, if he could spare me to go with your letters and the books. I think Locksbury is not above seventy miles from Mapleton ; I could get there in two days : and our harvest will not come on these six weeks.

Loveg. Why, Henry, could I leave my charge, I should be happy to go with you ; but if you could be spared, such a visit might be attended with most

blessed circumstances; and if your father has not got a horse to spare, fit for the journey, I can almost answer for it, Mr. Worthy will be very happy to accommodate you with one, if your lameness should not prove an impediment.

Hen. I thank God my hip is much strengthened since I have returned home. I feel very little inconvenience when I ride. I will go home and consult my father, and then I will call on you again.

Soon after this the conversation terminated with a prayer from Mr. Lovegood. Henry went home to consult with his father about the journey. He was, with some difficulty, persuaded to part with his much beloved son, who was now made so dear to him by the uniting ties of the Gospel, while Mr. Lovegood attended to his engagement, to write a very serious and appropriate letter to Mr. Reader; and to select a few books, such as might be the most conducive to give him a proper view of the Gospel dispensation; and if the reader will but wait, till after Henry's return, he may probably hear of some further events which were the result of this interesting visit. This second little volume, therefore, shall close, by laying before the reader two letters; the one from Mr. Lovegood to Mr. Reader, the other from Mrs. Chipman to her dying husband.

“ TO MR. READER.

“ SIR,

“ We all feel ourselves so deeply interested in your family afflictions as to excite us to shew you every possible attention for the alleviation of your distress. By the peculiar wish of your daughter, and by the benevolent assistance of Mr. Worthy, a purpose messenger waits upon you with this, and with some other tokens of our sympathy and respect.

“ Mr. Henry Littleworth, the young man who is so kind to be our messenger on this occasion, though once unhappily of a profane and dissolute turn, is now, by the grace of God, become remarkably serious and devout. This makes me feel more tenderly for your daughter, as her case, in some respects, is so similar to his own. Since he has experienced the converting power of divine grace upon his heart, he has considerably cultivated a good understanding, by reading and serious meditation upon useful and profitable subjects. To him therefore, I shall refer you, for all you wish to know, as it respects your daughter’s mind ; while, at the same time, I have no doubt, but that you will find him capable of advising with you, as it may respect what future steps should be taken, either upon the death or recovery of Mr. Chipman.

“ But, dear Sir, with the greatest tenderness, at least as it relates to the feelings of my own mind, I wish to obviate those mistakes, in which you conceive so highly respecting any applause I can take to myself, or any meritorious claim I can ever make before the bar of a just and holy God. Surely, Sir, it is beyond the power of an angel to give him more obedience than is due to his infinitely holy name ; therefore even their perfect services appear before him, as having no meritorious claim, when all the ability must be first received from him, ere any service they perform can be deemed acceptable in his sight.

“ Were Gabriel himself to presume to boast, and were the Lord to answer him, “ Take that which is thine, and go thy way,” would he not sink into nothing before his God ? No wonder, therefore, that while they are performing their highest acts of obedience, they are described as veiling their faces, and giving all the glory to Him, who has made

them what they are, and who still upholds them by the arm of his almighty power. If then the proud boast of merit be inconsistent even with Angels themselves, what should our language be, when sinners of our depraved race shall be called to stand in his holy presence, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but with infinite detestation and eternal abhorrence?

“Not to depreciate that which may be praiseworthy in you, dear Sir, or in any one else, as it respects our *outward* conduct between man and man; but surely as it relates to the *inward* state of our minds, before a Being of infinite purity. Who can stand when he appeareth? Never was one whose righteous character before man shone so bright as that of Job; but when his eye saw God; or in other words, when the eye of his mind saw into the nature of the infinite purity of God; with what solemn surprise does he cry, “Behold, I am vile!” And how humiliating was his language, as it farther respected himself: “Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Not less surprised was the prophet Isaiah, when the Seraphims’ voices cried to each other, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts!” Then said he, “Woe is me, for I am undone.” If the most holy and exalted of the saints of God thus humbled themselves in the dust before him; instead of our boasting of the *merit* of our righteousness, how much more have we cause to lie in the dust on account of the *demerit* of our sinfulness. If therefore, you will allow me to speak plainly the feelings of my mind on this subject, whatever difference subsists between me and the vilest sinner upon earth, my language must ever be like that of St. Paul; “By the grace of God I am what I am:” while, amidst my highest acquirements, I feel myself a sinner still; and indeed in every at-

tempt to serve God, I am sensible I fall short of my duty, and of his glory. And though I may not have been guilty of the Publican's practice, yet sure I am, I need to adopt the Publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

"Once, dear Sir, these things were hid from my eyes; while I was ignorant of God I was ignorant of myself. But, when I began to read my Bible with attention, I soon discovered, it was God's own account of a very depraved and fallen race; and, that the sentence of a just and holy law had pronounced eternal death against all mankind, as "all had sinned:" and, that it was now in vain for me any longer to make the Pharisee's plea, "I thank thee, I am not as other men;" while I was foolishly "trusting in myself, that I was righteous, and despised others;" saying in the pride of my heart, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou."

"But what sinner can ever be said to be righteous? Not more absurd is it to say, the guilty are innocent. The law has positively said, "The soul that sinneth shall die;" that "the wages of sin is death;" yea, and that "if we offend in one point, we are guilty of all;" for it matters not in what point we transgress, as the sentence goes forth by pronouncing, "Cursed is every one that continueth not (during his whole life) in all things written in the book of the law to do them."

"Thus by the knowledge of the purity and holiness of the Law, the proud notions of merit were soon banished far from my mind, and no other hope was left for me, but the hope of the Gospel; salvation for our ruined race, from his mercy alone, who came to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." I was now satisfied, "that there was no other name given among men whereby they could be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour." Thus,

Sir, I had been living on the false hope of a mere heathen, and never knew it, till divine mercy convinced me of the purity of God's law, and the impurity of my own nature. While the name of Christ had been sounded in my ears, yet I had no conception of the need of his salvation in my heart; it was on my own goodness, not on his grace, that I fixed my dependence. But now I feel and know, He alone is my peace and salvation; and that without the shedding of his blood, I never can be redeemed from the curse of the law: so that, in point of my acceptance and justification before God, I have no other plea left, but his obedience unto death on my behalf. I confess myself a sinner; and while I abhor every comparative idea of merit above others of my fellow sinners, (for we have all sinned, and fallen short of his glory) I trust alone on his mercy for my salvation.

“Not less ignorant was I of the nature of that holiness, possessed by every true believer, who is thus accepted in the Beloved. I mistook decency for devotion, and morality before man for spirituality before God. Never till I knew the evil of sin as a transgression against God's good and holy law, did I desire to be delivered from its inward dominion and power. I now know “I must be born again,” or in other words, “be renewed in the spirit of my mind:” and, of this I am persuaded, the pardoned believer has no inclination to live in sin, that grace may abound; for, he knows, that being justified by the redemption that is in Christ, he is dedicated unto God thereby, that he may live to his glory. I had not thus dwelt on my own experience so long, had I not conceived, that you also have been unhappily misled from the glorious hope of the Gospel, by the same mistake. I have, therefore, taken the liberty to transmit to

you a few books upon the evangelical, yet not less practical truths of the Gospel; and, I am sure, most thoroughly consistent with the articles and liturgy of that church, of which I am happy to confess myself a minister, and of which also I suppose yourself to be a member.

“ Though it grieves us all to see your daughter so excessively overcome by the dangerous state of Mr. Chipman’s health; it, notwithstanding, presents us with a most pleasing sensation, as it respects the tender and blessed state of mind, to which, by the grace of God, she seems most evidently to have been restored.

“ As the most worthy and excellent young man, the bearer of this, will take an opportunity of consulting with you, on what steps may be necessary to be taken on this unhappy event, I shall shorten this address by subscribing myself,

“ Your real friend and servant for Christ’s sake,

“ BEN. LOVEGOOD.”

Brookfield.

MRS. CHIPMAN’S LETTER.

“ My Dearest Husband,

“ If you can admit a wretch, so treacherous and vile, to address you in such terms, will you allow me to implore your pardon, in the most submissive language? Nothing but guilt and confusion fills my heart, exciting, at the same time, tears of the deepest contrition from my eyes; while I thus request you to forgive the worst of women, who has been so treacherous and cruel to the best of husbands; and, who has behaved so unnatural, as to forsake her own offspring also. My most dear and injured husband, I could not have presumed on this address if I had not been taught by divine mercy to abhor myself for my crimes; but, as I am now seek-

ing forgiveness of God, I feel I never can be happy until I am favoured with your forgiveness also. I am told, with inexpressible grief, by a letter from my father, that you are a dying man, through my most hateful conduct towards you. Is it possible for you to believe, after all that has passed, that I speak the truth when I say, I now feel, since a most merciful God has, I trust, changed my vile heart, a love to you stronger than ever I felt before? And, could I travel a thousand miles to heal your heart, the pleasure I should take in each painful step for such a purpose I cannot express. Yet, consider, I beseech you, your once dearest Jemima; and recollect how happy we were in the chaster days of our connexion; while I could keep your accounts, post your books, and wait upon you with the most affectionate attention. I cannot tell you how I execrate myself for having forsaken such an office, and for grieving the heart of such a husband. I beg you not, however, to suppose I mean hereby an excuse for my crimes; they cannot be lessened by any excuse whatever. Yet, I trust, having received that grace which makes me shudder at my former conduct; you will remember what once a poor Magdalen felt, when she washed our Saviour's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. And, though I scarcely dare presume to hope that he will forgive a wretch that has been so vile; yet, let me humbly request you to consider, what that most affectionate young man has to say to you, who brings you this letter, and who was not, until a merciful God changed his heart, much less wicked and hateful than myself. O then, let it be believed, that nothing in a way of mercy is impossible with God; and, surely, that mercy is needed by us all, when we consider what sinful hearts we have before him! who is infinitely holy. Oh! how

then shall such a wretch as I have been appear before him ! My only hope is from what Mr. Lovegood, the excellent minister of the parish in which I now live, has advised me to read, which is still to be found in our old Common Prayer Books, in the lamentation of a sinner :

Mercy, good Lord ! mercy I ask,
This is the total sum ;
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit,
Lord, let thy mercy come.

“ Receive these few lines from your truly penitent, and as truly affectionate,

“ JEMIMA CHIPMAN.”

Lower Brookfield, near Mapleton.

Having thus laid the two letters before my readers, they will naturally conclude, that somewhat interesting may be the result of Henry's return ; by that time I shall learn how far the public would wish for further information on a train of events, which, I hope, may not prove less instructing than any of the former.

END OF VOL. I.